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Report of the Secretary-General on his mission of good offices in Cyprus

I. Introduction

1. The Security Council, in its resolution 2430 (2018), requested me to submit a report by 15 October 2018 on my good offices and the outcome of the consultations being conducted by a senior United Nations official, Jane Holl Lute, on my behalf. In the resolution, the Council noted the lack of progress towards a settlement since the conclusion of the Conference on Cyprus in July 2017 and urged the sides and all involved participants to seize the important opportunity presented by the consultations with regard to a possible way forward. The Council also called upon the sides, the leaders of the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities, and all involved parties to actively engage with openness and creativity and to fully commit to a settlement process under United Nations auspices. The Council also expressed its full support for my good offices to remain available to assist the sides, should they jointly decide to re-engage in negotiations with the necessary political will.

2. The present report is focused on developments from 21 May 2018 to 5 October 2018, providing an update on the activities carried out by the good offices mission under the leadership of my Deputy Special Adviser on Cyprus, Elizabeth Spehar. As requested, it further informs the Council on the outcome of the consultations conducted on my behalf by Ms. Lute.

II. Background

3. I noted in my previous report on progress towards a settlement (S/2018/610) that, 10 months after the closing of the Conference on Cyprus, no further progress had been made towards a settlement. I observed that the political stalemate had further lowered expectations on the island, despite important advances registered during the most recent round of talks, and contributed to diminished trust between the leaders and their respective communities and among the parties overall. I further noted with concern the continued absence of dialogue and the uncertain prospects for the future, while also acknowledging that there was still scope for the sides to act decisively to chart a common way forward. In the report, I conveyed my intention to send a senior United Nations official to conduct in-depth consultations with the parties.

4. In the current reporting period, several controversies related to intercommunal relations arose, serving as a stark reminder of the ongoing divide. These included the reaction by some political actors in the Greek Cypriot community to musicians

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employed by the Cyprus Symphony Orchestra intending to play at a festival in the north (the musicians ultimately refrained from participating) as well as the protests by civil society activists on both sides of the divide against the decision of local Turkish Cypriot authorities to open a beach in the Famagusta area only to Turkish Cypriots and Turkish nationals. Furthermore, a group of 238 Greek Cypriot journalists signed a letter of protest against a bicommunal glossary of sensitive words and phrases for voluntary consideration by journalists from both communities that had been launched on 10 July by the Representative on Freedom of the Media of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the aim of which was "to encourage sensitive communications, to promote the sharing of stories and experiences, and, eventually, to help ease tensions".

5. One widely observed phenomenon, however, which indicated growing contacts between the two communities, at least those of a transactional nature, was an increase in the number of crossings between the two sides of the island. There was reportedly a significant increase in the number of Greek Cypriots crossing to the north from January to August, as compared with the same period last year. In August alone, the number of Greek Cypriots crossing to the north almost doubled compared with the number of people crossing during the month of January 2018, likely due to economic reasons. Greek Cypriot purchases in the north were up 32 per cent while those of Turkish Cypriots in the south were down 22 per cent. These have also been a concrete reminder of the possible economic benefits that would stem from a comprehensive settlement.

6. The period under review has seen fewer tensions surrounding the exploitation of hydrocarbon reserves off the coast of Cyprus. New rounds of exploratory drilling scheduled for the last quarter of 2018 could however result in renewed tensions and significantly complicate prospects for dialogue between the parties.

III. Status of the process

7. Following the closing of the Conference on Cyprus in Crans-Montana, Switzerland, on 7 July 2017, I had called upon the parties to reflect on the way forward. In early July 2018, I asked Ms. Lute, as a senior United Nations official, to consult with the parties to the Conference to seek the outcomes of their reflection since the Conference and to help determine whether the necessary conditions were in place for a meaningful process. I stressed that she should underline that the United Nations remained available to support the sides and that the interests of all Cypriots would remain at the core of the efforts of the United Nations on the island. Through these consultations, I asked that she try to understand whether the parties are ready to undertake the effort necessary to achieve a concrete resolution of the Cyprus issue.

8. Prior to the launch of the consultations, my Deputy Special Adviser met with both leaders, who expressed satisfaction with the upcoming consultations and reiterated their readiness to engage with Ms. Lute in discussions on a possible way forward. In his public statements, the Greek Cypriot leader, Nicos Anastasiades, welcomed the consultations. He stated his readiness to resume talks from where they had left off in Crans-Montana in July 2017 and expressed the hope that the consultations would serve as a catalyst towards a resumption of negotiations. Likewise, in his public remarks, the Turkish Cypriot leader, Mustafa Akıncı, also welcomed the consultations and underscored that they should not be considered as a resumption of the talks. He reconfirmed his readiness to work towards a settlement, while underscoring that the Turkish Cypriot side would not be part of an endless negotiation process.

9. At the same time, public expectations regarding the consultations appeared contained in both communities, as popular opinion in Cyprus since the Conference generally reflected either apathy or discouragement with respect to a return to talks. Appeals to the leaders or calls for the United Nations to take the initiative towards the resumption of talks were, however, sporadically heard, voiced primarily by bicommunal civil society groups. On 1 September, for example, the Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot trade unions issued a joint statement calling on the leaders to engage in a determined manner in renewed negotiations to achieve a settlement that would serve the interests of all Cypriots. Similarly, on 26 September, those Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot political parties which regularly meet under the auspices of the Embassy of Slovakia in Cyprus issued a joint communiqué welcoming the attempt by the Secretary-General to explore options through consultations, while strongly urging the leaders to "work hard for the resumption of the talks on the basis of the framework and procedures proposed by the Secretary-General, towards attaining a federal solution and reunification of the island".

10. During the reporting period, my Deputy Special Adviser on Cyprus and the good offices team continued their outreach to a range of stakeholders, seeking the views of political parties, civil society groups, business people and analysts on both sides on the current situation on the island and encouraging their involvement in building a constituency for peace.

11. On 23 July, Ms. Lute travelled to Cyprus to meet separately with Mr. Anastasiades and Mr. Akıncı. Ms. Lute later visited the capitals of the three guarantor powers, Turkey, Greece and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, for similar consultations. She met with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkey on 30 July 2018, with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Greece on 11 September 2018 and with the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs and the Minister of State for Europe and the Americas of the United Kingdom on 12 September 2018. Ms. Lute also met with the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice President of the European Commission on 13 September 2018. It is to be recalled that the European Union had attended the Conference on Cyprus as an observer.

12. I met with Mr. Anastasiades and Mr. Akıncı bilaterally in New York on 28 September 2018 to hear their views on how they saw the way forward, following Ms. Lute's consultations. I reiterated the commitment of the United Nations to Cyprus and the continued availability of my good offices.

13. These efforts, in line with the calls of the Security Council, underscore the firm commitment of the United Nations to supporting the leaders in efforts to reach a comprehensive settlement should they jointly decide to re-engage in results-oriented negotiations.

IV. Status of the process: other features

14. In its most recent resolution on Cyprus (resolution 2430 (2018)), the Security Council called for renewed efforts to implement all remaining confidence-building measures and for agreement on and implementation of further joint and unilateral steps to build trust between the communities. The Security Council furthermore called upon the two leaders to intensify the work with the technical committees established in 2008, with the aim of improving the daily lives of Cypriots.

15. During the reporting period, there was little movement on new trust-building or confidence-building measures, while the implementation of outstanding agreed confidence-building measures previously agreed by the two leaders made scant

progress. As noted in my previous report (S/2018/610), the leaders had renewed their focus on the work at two additional crossing points, as announced in 2015 and taken up by the Technical Committee on Crossings, with the intention of opening them promptly. Some, but not all, of the necessary public works at both crossings were completed during this period. However, despite these efforts, and notwithstanding the work by the United Nations Development Programme to support technical preparations, as well as the continued efforts by the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) to find solutions to issues and concerns raised by both sides, regrettably the two crossing points have yet to be opened.

16. To date, there continues to be no significant change in the operation of the technical committees. Some of these bicommunal bodies, such as the Technical Committee on Cultural Heritage, the Joint Communications Room, which is linked to the Technical Committee on Crime and Criminal Matters, and the Technical Committee on Education, continue to meet regularly and work on important bicommunal initiatives. Others meet only sporadically. Out of 12 technical committees, 7 have not met in over a year, and one of those has not met since autumn 2016.

17. During the reporting period, the Imagine project, which is aimed at increasing connections between schoolchildren from both communities through peace education and contact, continued its activities. The project was developed by the bicommunal Association for Historical Dialogue and Research under the auspices of the Technical Committee on Education and enjoys support from the Embassy of Germany. The Technical Committee on Education met twice to lend its support to the implementation of the project, which received additional funding from the Embassy of Germany to expand the scope of its work and promote activities across the divide and not only in the buffer zone as has been the case to date. In a recent development the Turkish Cypriot authorities reportedly announced that more Greek language teachers would be brought into the school system.

18. On 4 July, the Cyprus Women's Lobby organized a meeting with a group of women peacebuilders from across the island, with the support of the Mediterranean Women Mediators Network, the Women Mediators Network across the Commonwealth, the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom and UNFICYP. The event brought women from across the island together, in order to reflect and build on efforts by women activists to strengthen the involvement of women in the peace process. Follow-up activities are planned for autumn 2018, with an emphasis on securing a broader base of women island-wide for involvement in this forum.

19. From 22 to 26 September, co-founders of the Northern Ireland Women's Coalition participated in a series of events on the island to share experiences and discuss the role of women's engagement in the Good Friday Agreement and within peace processes more broadly, and to share lessons that could strengthen the inclusion of women's perspectives in the peace process in Cyprus. The programme was hosted and facilitated by the PRIO Cyprus Centre and the Embassy of Ireland in Cyprus, in partnership with UNFICYP and my good offices mission, and involved public events in different locations across the island, as well as more focused meetings with women activists, politicians, academics, university students and gender practitioners. During the meetings, there was discussion on issues ranging from outreach and community mobilization, as well as how to support the inclusion of civil society more broadly in the peace process. Importantly, following several months of inactivity, several members of the Technical Committee on Gender Equality met on 23 September during a meeting held in the context of the visit of the co-founders of the Northern Ireland Women's Coalition. Among other issues, methods to draw a gender perspective most effectively into any future resumption of talks were discussed.

20. Further to the call by the Security Council, my good offices mission and UNFICYP have held several discussions with civil society representatives, as well as economic and gender experts who have expressed interest in formulating a plan of action to conduct a gender-sensitive socioeconomic impact assessment.

21. During the summer period, intercommunal activities remained limited; however, both my good offices mission and UNFICYP pursued efforts to facilitate intercommunal contacts and cooperation and encouraged civil society to contribute to building a constituency for peace on the island. For example, on 6 July 2018, the missions co-hosted an informal meeting, which included representatives of civil society, the international community and the United Nations, to network and exchange views on how to further encourage and support intercommunal contacts. Such efforts have assisted in identifying additional assistance for future civil society initiatives to promote peace and reconciliation.

V. Observations and conclusions

22. Ten years after their initial establishment, the bicommunal technical committees continue to operate, albeit with little momentum. Overall, the stated commitment of the leaders to revitalizing these bicommunal institutions has not yet led to increased or more effective activities on the ground, and the work of the technical committees remains inconsistent. In this context, the conduct of a United Nations-facilitated stock-taking exercise on the activities and modi operandi of the technical committees over the past 10 years could be useful in identifying potential areas of improvement and ways to strengthen and streamline their work.

23. I reiterate once again that the natural resources found in and around Cyprus should benefit both communities and should provide a strong incentive for all parties concerned to work in earnest towards a mutually acceptable and durable solution. Bearing in mind that all parties have recently reiterated their continued commitment to this objective, all efforts should be made to avoid unnecessary escalation in the coming months and to pursue dialogue on this issue.

24. Ms. Lute conducted careful consultations, and I am grateful for the thoughtful engagement and trust of the leaders of the two communities, the guarantor powers and others who have offered informed and constructive views on the prospects for a peaceful resolution of this issue, which has vexed the best efforts of the international community for over five decades.

25. Informed by these consultations, as well as my own discussions with the leaders of the two communities, I believe that prospects for a comprehensive settlement between the communities on the island remain alive, notwithstanding the well-known history of the efforts of the United Nations to broker peace between the communities and the remaining work that the parties must undertake to overcome the challenges that have, to date, impeded resolution. I observe clearly that continued support for a horizon of endless process without result lies behind us, not before us. I note the widespread consensus that an unchanging status quo — i.e., the lack of a resolution to the Cyprus issue — is not sustainable. I believe that all Cypriots deserve a common future that one thing alone can bring: a lasting agreement achieved within a clear horizon.

26. Throughout these years, the international community has demonstrated its willingness to assist the parties in their efforts to resolve long-standing antagonisms in ways that offer prospects for a better future. The message of this Organization has been consistent: while the United Nations can assist the parties, an enduring solution to the Cyprus issue is for the Cypriots to decide. The view among many informed

observers is that a solution will measurably improve the future circumstances of every Cypriot. While a settlement will demand that each side accept less than the fullest measure of satisfaction, it will also open up opportunities for growth, prosperity and confidence going forward.

27. I note that the parties recall the framework of six points that I offered last June. I also acknowledge that new ideas may additionally be needed in order for a fresh effort to bear fruit. In addition, I hold the strong conviction that the way ahead must be well prepared, with a sense of urgency and focus to seize the willingness of the two sides to negotiate. In view of what I understand to be the sides' interest to engage in such an effort, and before formal negotiations should be launched, I will instruct Ms. Lute to continue discussions to gauge the true extent of convergence on key issues and the willingness of the sides to incorporate novel proposals as part of an overall solution towards a common future that they themselves can envisage. Prior to resuming full-fledged negotiations, the sides should agree on terms of reference that would constitute the consensus starting point for a possible negotiated conclusion to the Cyprus issue.

28. I urge the parties to mobilize their creativity and commitment to help their communities understand and support the aim of a durable solution. In this regard, I believe deeply in the vitality, energy and strength of the island's population, including, especially, its women and youth, and I urge their greater engagement to help build the necessary confidence to take the steps that such a solution will require. It is my hope that these discussions can lead, once again, to the deployment of the full weight of my good offices in what may prove a lasting resolution of the Cyprus issue.

29. In conclusion, I wish to thank my Deputy Special Adviser and the personnel serving in my good offices mission in Cyprus for the dedication and commitment with which they have discharged the responsibilities entrusted to them by the Security Council. I also wish to express my appreciation for the timely and efficient way in which Ms. Lute carried out the consultations entrusted to her.

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Implementation of Security Council resolution 1559 (2004)

Twenty-eighth semi-annual report of the Secretary-General

1. The present report is the twenty-eighth semi-annual report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1559 (2004). It provides a review and an assessment of the implementation of the resolution since the issuance of my previous report on the subject, on 21 May 2018 (S/2018/480), and covers developments up to 28 September 2018.

I. Implementation of resolution 1559 (2004)

2. Since the adoption of resolution 1559 (2004) by the Security Council on 2 September 2004, limited progress has been made in its implementation and a number of provisions, including with respect to the existence and activities of Lebanese and non-Lebanese militias, remain pending.

A. Sovereignty, territorial integrity, unity and political independence of Lebanon

3. Through the adoption of resolution 1559 (2004), the Security Council sought to strengthen the sovereignty, territorial integrity, unity and political independence of Lebanon under the sole and exclusive authority of the Government of Lebanon throughout the country, in accordance with the Taif Accords of 1989, to which all the political parties in Lebanon had committed themselves. That objective has remained the priority of my efforts.

4. Following the parliamentary elections held in Lebanon on 6 May 2018, the new Parliament, at its first session, on 23 May, re-elected Nabih Berri, of the Amal Movement, as Speaker for the sixth time, with 98 votes out of 128. On the same day, the Parliament elected Elie Ferzli, who is allied with the Free Patriotic Movement, as Deputy Speaker, with 81 votes. Mr. Ferzli replaced Farid Makari of the Future Movement, who had served as Deputy Speaker since 2005.

5. Saad Hariri was nominated as Prime Minister-designate on 24 May after consultations between the President of Lebanon, Michel Aoun, and Members of Parliament, during which 111 of them expressed their support for Mr. Hariri to become Prime Minister. In a speech that day, the Prime Minister-designate stated that all large parliamentary blocs agreed on "the need to form a national entente Government as soon as possible", adding that "the new Government is required to

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continue to stabilize political stability, strengthen State institutions and reinforce the economy". He further stated that the Government was expected to "consolidate the commitment to the policy of disassociation and establish the best relations with the Arab brothers".

6. Since then, the Prime Minister-designate has conducted parliamentary consultations aimed at forming a Government, which are ongoing as at the time of reporting. The challenges around government formation ostensibly relate to a lack of agreement among political forces on the allocation and distribution of key government portfolios.

7. Lebanese leaders have publicly reiterated the country's commitment to the disassociation policy. Most recently, in a television interview on 31 August, the Prime Minister-designate stated that "we need Lebanon to stay in a position where it doesn't take any stance, and this is where we came with a policy of disassociation". In a press conference with the Chancellor of Germany, Angela Merkel, held on 22 June, he stated that the next Government would maintain its commitment to the disassociation policy. The President of Lebanon also reiterated the country's commitment to the disassociation policy, most recently on 21 September, reportedly stating in an interview that "Lebanon refuses to meddle in the internal affairs of any country; we hold on to the dissociation policy pertaining to the conflicts jolting the region, especially in Syria". Noting that Hizbullah's intervention in the Syrian Arab Republic was condemned by some, he reportedly stated that Hizbullah was "defending the lands" against terrorist attacks.

8. In a speech on 19 September on the eve of Ashura', Hizbullah Secretary-General, Hassan Nasrallah, stated: "We should not disassociate ourselves because what is happening in the region will determine the fate of the region and Lebanon. We agree that the Government should disassociate itself, but political forces are not disassociating themselves."

9. The number of registered refugees from the Syrian Arab Republic hosted by Lebanon totalled 976,002 as at 31 July 2018. Returns of individuals and small groups of Syrian refugees continued, mostly facilitated by the General Directorate of General Security of Lebanon. Although not involved in the organization of these returns, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees coordinates with the General Directorate to support the returning refugees in obtaining their civil documents and education certificates, to address other issues critical for their re-establishment in the Syrian Arab Republic and to be present at each departure point.

10. In its resolution 1680 (2006), the Security Council strongly encouraged the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic to respond positively to the request made by the Government of Lebanon to delineate their common border. This remains critical to enable proper border control and management, including the movement of people and the potential movement of arms.

11. The delineation and demarcation of the boundaries of Lebanon also remain elements essential to guaranteeing national sovereignty and territorial integrity. While border delineation is a bilateral matter, progress on the issue remains an obligation for Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic, in accordance with resolution 1680 (2006).

12. As stated in my report of 13 July 2018 on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1701 (2006) (S/2018/703), the Lebanese Armed Forces continued to deploy land border regiments and construct border observation posts along the border with the Syrian Arab Republic. On 29 May, the Central Training Centre for border security was inaugurated at Rayak Air Base, in the Biqa' Valley, as part of the

technical assistance project entitled "Enhanced capability for integrated border management in Lebanon", funded by the European Union. There were no reports of cross-border incidents on the eastern and northern borders during the reporting period. Unconfirmed reports of smuggling continued, however.

13. Israel continued to occupy the northern part of the village of Ghajar and an adjacent area north of the Blue Line, in violation of the sovereignty of Lebanon and resolutions 1559 (2004) and 1701 (2006).

14. There was no progress in relation to the issue of the Shab'a Farms area. Furthermore, neither the Syrian Arab Republic nor Israel has responded to the provisional definition of the area contained in my report of 30 October 2007 on the implementation of resolution 1701 (2006) (S/2007/641).

15. Unmanned aerial vehicles and fixed-wing aircraft, including fighter jets, of the Israel Defense Forces continued to make almost daily overflights of Lebanon during the reporting period, in violation of Lebanese sovereignty and resolutions 1559 (2004) and 1701 (2006). In identical letters addressed to me and the President of the Security Council dated 29 May 2018 (A/72/887-S/2018/517), the Permanent Representative of Lebanon to the United Nations stated: "On 22 May 2018, an Israeli warplane violated Lebanese airspace and circled over the city of Beirut. The Israeli Government flaunted that violation by displaying photographs of the combat aircraft on 22 May 2018 at a conference of air force commanders held in Israel." The Permanent Representative expressed the condemnation of Lebanon of the violation and called upon the Security Council "to condemn this hostile action" and "to take all measures needed to deter Israel from continuing to commit serious violations of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Lebanon".

16. The Special Tribunal for Lebanon held closing arguments in the case of *The Prosecutor v. Ayyash et al.* between 11 and 21 September. Against that backdrop, in a speech on 26 August, Hizbullah Secretary-General Hassan Nasrallah cautioned what he said were political forces betting on the verdict of the Tribunal not to "play with fire". In response, at the end of a meeting of the Future Movement parliamentary bloc held on 28 August, chaired by the Prime Minister-designate, the bloc issued a communiqué stating that it considered that achieving justice for the assassination of Rafic Hariri was "not subject to any threat of intimidation". After attending the opening of the final hearings in The Hague on 11 September, the Prime Minister-designate stated that "Rafic Hariri was not a man of revenge but of justice and we will continue on this path", insisted on the stability and security of Lebanon and pledged to deal with the verdict of the trial "as a responsible official who has the responsibility to protect the country and the Lebanese people".

B. Extension of control of the Government of Lebanon over all Lebanese territory

17. The Government of Lebanon continued its efforts to extend the authority of the State throughout all the Lebanese territory, as called for in the Taif Accords and in resolution 1559 (2004). The Lebanese Armed Forces remained at the forefront of such efforts. Yet, that endeavour continued to be challenged.

18. The Lebanese Armed Forces and other security forces continued to confront threats to the country's security. On 22 May, armed clashes between the Lebanese Armed Forces and a group of wanted individuals in the northern city of Tripoli left one soldier killed and eight others injured.

19. Insecurity in Baalbek-Hirmil Governorate, including as a result of the possession of unauthorized weapons by individuals, posed renewed challenges to the

exercise of State authority during the reporting period and prompted the Lebanese Armed Forces to step up their operations in the Biqa' Valley area. On 31 May, in response to a request from the caretaker Minister of the Interior, Nohad Machnouk, the President of Lebanon reportedly pledged to "hold intensive meetings with political and security leaders to put an end to chaos in the Baalbek-Hirmil region as soon as possible". As noted in my report on the implementation of resolution 1701 (2006) (S/2018/703), two persons were killed and five injured in a family dispute in Baalbek. In response, on 21 June, the Lebanese Armed Forces reportedly started to patrol the city of Baalbek and to set up mobile checkpoints across the city and in the vicinity of Ras al-Ain, arresting one suspect. On 26 June, the President pledged that the security measures would be "accompanied by an integrated development work consistent with the economic and social needs of the region". He added that at its previous session, the Higher Defence Council had adopted a series of sequenced measures that were being implemented progressively. On 19 July, two centres of the General Directorate of General Security were inaugurated in the Biqa' Valley. On that occasion, the Director General of the Directorate, General Abbas Ibrahim, reportedly stated that he was confident in the success of the security plan for the area.

20. On 23 July, eight individuals were reportedly killed, including a local drug dealer, Ali Zaid Ismail, and six injured in raids conducted by the Lebanese Armed Forces in Hammoudieh in the Biqa' Valley, while several Lebanese and Syrian nationals were apprehended over possession of drugs and arms. There had been a long-standing arrest warrant against Ali Zaid Ismail. The operation was part of a new security plan, primarily an anti-drug plan, that the Lebanese Armed Forces were enforcing in the area of Baalbek-Hirmil. During a raid carried out in Al-Hirmil in search of wanted individuals on 25 September, a soldier from the Lebanese Armed Forces was killed and several others were wounded.

21. The Lebanese Armed Forces also continued to arrest individuals allegedly affiliated with or supporting extremist groups. On 10 September, the Internal Security Forces apprehended two individuals reportedly planning terrorist attacks in Beirut's southern suburbs, as well as planning to kill members of the Lebanese Armed Forces.

C. Disbanding and disarmament of Lebanese and non-Lebanese militias

22. In its resolution 1559 (2004), the Security Council called for the disbanding and disarmament of all Lebanese and non-Lebanese militias, a key provision of the resolution that has yet to be implemented. The provision reflects and reaffirms a decision to which all Lebanese committed themselves in the Taif Accords.

23. Lebanese and non-Lebanese militias within the country continued to operate outside the control of the Government, in violation of resolution 1559 (2004). While several groups across the political spectrum in Lebanon possess weapons outside government control, Hizbullah is the most heavily armed militia in the country. In a democratic State, it remains a fundamental anomaly that a political party maintains a militia that has no accountability to the democratic, governmental institutions of the State but has the power to take that State to war. The self-acknowledged maintenance of arms by Hizbullah and other groups and the alleged increase by Hizbullah of its arsenal pose a serious challenge to the State's ability to exercise full sovereignty and authority over its territory. In a speech on 20 September, Hizbullah Secretary-General Hassan Nasrallah claimed for the first time that "the resistance owns enough precision (accurate) and non-precision (non-accurate) missiles and armament capabilities that if Israel imposes a war on Lebanon, Israel would face a fate and a reality it never expected". In addition, several Palestinian armed groups continued to operate in the country, inside and outside the Palestine refugee camps.

24. There has been no tangible progress towards the disbanding and disarming of Lebanese and non-Lebanese militias, as called for in the Taif Accords and resolution 1559 (2004). Since the adoption of that resolution, no specific steps have been taken to tackle that crucial issue, which lies at the heart of the sovereignty and political independence of Lebanon. The maintenance by Hizbullah of a military arsenal outside of a legal framework and its involvement in the Syrian Arab Republic continued to be denounced by a number of voices in Lebanon, who consider those issues to be destabilizing factors in the country and ones that undermine democracy. Many Lebanese see the continued presence of such arms as an implicit threat that the weapons could be used within Lebanon for political reasons.

25. The participation of Hizbullah and other Lebanese in the conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic continued to breach the policy of disassociation and the principles of the Baabda Declaration. As noted in my report on the implementation of resolution 1701 (2006) (S/2018/703), on 6 June, Speaker Nabih Bérri said that Hizbullah would only withdraw once "Syria is liberated and its territories are united". In a speech on 8 June, Hizbullah Secretary-General Nasrallah stated that Hizbullah was present in the Syrian Arab Republic on the basis of a request by the Syrian leadership, and that it would withdraw only at the request of the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic, a point he reiterated in his speech of 19 September.

26. On 19 August, Hizbullah Secretary-General Nasrallah reportedly met a delegation of Yemeni Houthis led by its spokesperson, Mohammad Abdul Salam. In a letter dated 24 August 2018 addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2018/595), the Permanent Representative of Yemen to the United Nations, referencing the meeting, expressed his concern at, inter alia, Hizbullah's "transfer of advisers and military instructors to the Houthi coup" as posing "a serious regional and global threat", and asked the Council, through the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 2140 (2014), "to investigate, within its mandate, Hizbullah's activities that pose a serious threat to Yemen and to take appropriate measures". In an interview with a Russian television channel on 20 August following a meeting with the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, Sergey Lavrov, the caretaker Minister for Foreign Affairs of Lebanon, Gebran Bassil, responding to a question about the alleged meeting between Hizbullah and the Houthis, stated that "as Foreign Minister, I am compelled to express Lebanon's official position, which is disassociation", adding that Lebanon did not "support interference in Yemen's affairs".

27. Against the backdrop of a reported Israeli air strike over the Syrian Arab Republic on 17 September and the subsequent downing of a Russian aircraft by Syrian anti-aircraft fire, resulting in the death of 15 Russian personnel, the Israel Defense Forces acknowledged on 18 September to have "targeted [overnight] a facility of the Syrian Armed Forces from which systems to manufacture accurate and lethal weapons were about to be transferred on behalf of Iran to Hizbullah in Lebanon".

28. In a speech on 9 May 2018 congratulating Lebanese citizens for the parliamentary elections, the President of Lebanon reiterated his intention to develop "a defensive strategy that organizes the defence of the homeland and preserves its sovereignty and territorial integrity" and that would "complete the implementation of the Taif agreement". After a meeting with the Assistant Secretary of Defence for International Security Affairs of the United States of America, Robert Karem, on 23 August, the President reiterated his "intention to call for a national dialogue on the defence strategy once the formation of the new Government is completed". On 25 September, the Lebanese Parliament ratified the Arms Trade Treaty. The multilateral treaty regulates the international trade and transfer of conventional weapons, with a focus on enhancing the responsibility of Governments, including to

prevent the illicit transfer of arms in Lebanon and illegal circulation of weapons outside of State control.

29. The security situation in the Palestine refugee camps remained relatively calm during the reporting period, with a smaller number of armed clashes relative to previous reporting periods. On 25 June, the Lebanese Army Command announced in a communiqué that it had removed the electronic gates it had previously installed at the entrances of the Ein El Helweh and Mieh Mieh refugee camps on 10 June, which had triggered protests. On 26 June, a suspected drug dealer was reportedly killed during drug-related clashes in Ein El Helweh. In the Mieh Mieh camp, a man apprehended by the Ansar Allah group on suspicion of an attempt on the life of the group's leader was found hanged in the group's headquarters on 22 July, leading to increased tensions. On 15 September, the situation in the Ein El Helweh camp escalated significantly after one person was killed by the son of Bilal Abu Arqub, the leader of an extremist group. Tensions increased when the suspect, who sought refuge in the Islamist-controlled section of the camp, refused to surrender to national authorities.

30. The handover of some individuals from Palestine refugee camps wanted by the Lebanese authorities continued during the reporting period. On 30 July, one of the supporters of militant Salafist sheikh Ahmad al-Assir who had fled to the Ein El Helweh camp after clashes between the sheikh's supporters and the Lebanese Armed Forces in 2013, as highlighted in my report of 16 October 2013 (S/2013/612), surrendered to the Lebanese army intelligence. On 12 August, the Palestinian factions at the Mieh Mieh camp handed over to the Lebanese Armed Forces several camp residents who were reportedly wanted for involvement in armed clashes in the camp. On 19 September, the Lebanese Armed Forces stated that it had arrested an individual in Ein El Helweh camp "for belonging to the terrorist organization Abdullah Azzam Brigades and for his relation with the two suicide bombers who targeted the Iranian embassy in Bir Hassan" in 2013 (see S/2014/296).

31. The presence of Palestinian armed groups outside the camps also continued. Notwithstanding the decision taken in 2006 in the context of the national dialogue, and confirmed at subsequent sessions, to disarm Palestinian militias outside the camps within a six-month period, no progress was made during the reporting period with regard to dismantling the military bases of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command and Fatah al-Intifada in the country.

32. The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) continued its efforts to deliver essential health, education, relief and social services to Palestine refugees in Lebanon, in the face of serious funding shortfalls. I attended the UNRWA pledging conference held in New York on 25 June, where donors expressed strong support for ensuring the continuity of the Agency's work. The United States decided on 31 August to stop all of its funding to the Agency. Additional commitments were secured at the ministerial meeting held in New York on 27 September, which I attended, and at which strong support for the Agency's work was also reiterated. As of September 2018, the overall shortfall in the Agency's budget has been reduced to $64 million.

II. Observations

33. Almost five months have passed since Saad Hariri was nominated as Prime Minister-designate. While I take note of the continued efforts to form a new Government, all concerned must step up their efforts to reach an agreement expeditiously. This is also necessary in order to seize opportunities to advance the priorities set forth by Lebanon and the international community at the high-level

conferences earlier in 2018 in Rome, Paris and Brussels. Once a new Government is formed, I encourage Lebanese leaders to give due consideration to the principles articulated by the International Support Group for Lebanon adopted at its ministerial meeting of 8 December 2017, as well as the outcome documents of the high-level international conferences and relevant Security Council resolutions, as a basis for the international community's steadfast partnership with Lebanon.

34. The widespread presence of weapons outside the control of the State, combined with the existence of heavily armed militias, continues to undermine security and stability in Lebanon. The maintenance by Hizbullah of sizeable and sophisticated military capabilities outside the control of the Government of Lebanon remains a matter of grave concern. I note with concern the claim by Hassan Nasrallah that Hizbullah possesses precision weapons. I reiterate my calls for all concerned to contribute to efforts to reinforce the institutions of the Lebanese State. I call again upon Hizbullah and all other parties concerned not to engage in any military activity inside or outside Lebanon, consistent with the requirements of the Taif Accords and resolution 1559 (2004). It is critical that the Accords be preserved and implemented by all to avoid the spectre of a renewed confrontation among Lebanese citizens and to strengthen the institutions of the State. The Lebanese State should increase its efforts to achieve a monopoly over the possession of weapons and the use of force throughout its territory. I continue to urge the Government and the armed forces of Lebanon to take all measures necessary to prohibit Hizbullah and other armed groups from acquiring weapons and building paramilitary capacity outside the authority of the State, in violation of resolution 1559 (2004).

35. I welcome the renewed commitment of the President of Lebanon to develop a national defence strategy once a Government is formed. This, among other pressing matters, highlights the need for a Government to be formed soon. I reiterate my earlier encouragement to the President to spearhead a renewed dialogue on a national defence strategy and to political leaders to support him in that endeavour. It is time for Lebanon to resume the national dialogue as a Lebanese-led and Lebanese-owned process, in line with the country's international obligations. A national dialogue should address the need to achieve a State monopoly over the possession and use of weapons and the use of force.

36. The renewed commitment by the President, the Prime Minister-designate and the Minister for Foreign Affairs to the policy of disassociation is an important signal that the policy remains the core tenet of Lebanon in its approach to conflicts in the region. At the same time, Lebanon needs to ensure that these commitments are turned into deeds. Hizbullah's engagement in the conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic is not only in breach of the disassociation policy and the principles of the Baabda Declaration of 2012, but also carries a risk of entangling Lebanon in the regional conflicts and poses risks to the stability of Lebanon and of the region. The involvement of Hizbullah in the Syrian Arab Republic for several years demonstrates the failure of Hizbullah to disarm and its refusal to be accountable to the State institutions that the implementation of resolution 1559 (2004) was intended to strengthen.

37. I continue to be concerned by the reported involvement of Hizbullah, as well as that of other Lebanese elements, in fighting elsewhere in the region. In particular, I note the allegations by the Government of Yemen about Hizbullah's involvement in the conflict there. I call upon countries in the region that maintain close ties with Hizbullah to encourage the transformation of that armed group into a solely civilian political party, and its disarmament, in accordance with the requirements of the Taif Accords and resolution 1559 (2004), in the best interests of Lebanon and of regional peace and security.

38. I condemn all violations of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Lebanon. They also undermine the credibility of the Lebanese security institutions and generate anxiety among the civilian population. I reiterate that the overflights of Lebanese airspace by Israeli military aircraft are violations of Lebanese sovereignty and resolutions 1559 (2004) and 1701 (2006). I renew my calls for Israel to adhere to its obligations under relevant Security Council resolutions and to withdraw its forces from the northern part of the village of Ghajar and an adjacent area north of the Blue Line, as well as to cease immediately its overflights of Lebanese airspace.

39. The absence of shooting, shelling, air strikes, rocket attacks and incursions from the Syrian Arab Republic during the reporting period is noteworthy. This presents a renewed opportunity for the Syrian Arab Republic and Lebanon to make progress in the delineation of their common border, in respect of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Lebanon. This is critical to enabling proper border control and management, including the movement of people and the potential movement of arms. I call upon all concerned to cease violations of the border and to respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Lebanon.

40. I have previously noted that it is in the interest of Lebanon and in line with its obligations under international law to ensure that those behind terrorist acts, including political assassinations, are held accountable and that violence is not committed with impunity. I note the continued work of the Special Tribunal for Lebanon, which sends a clear message that impunity will not be tolerated.

41. I appreciate the efforts of Lebanon aimed at extending its authority throughout its territory, including through renewed efforts to address the insecurity in the Biqa' Valley. I welcome the Biqa' security plan and encourage all security services to work together to address the continued challenges in the area. I also encourage the Lebanese State to continue its efforts to extend other State services throughout its territory.

42. The support displayed by 34 donor countries and organizations present at the ministerial meeting of 27 September in support of UNRWA has been a relief and has raised hopes that UNRWA will be able to continue its critical functions. In Lebanon, UNRWA services and contributions are vital to the dignity and security of Palestine refugees. The deficit in UNRWA funding, however, persists and threatens the continued delivery of assistance by the Agency. I encourage other donor countries to come forward with additional funding for the Agency, which remains a key factor for stability in the Palestine refugee camps and the region. Such efforts are without prejudice to the need for the just resolution of the Palestine refugee question in the context of a comprehensive settlement in the region.

43. The international community has continued to support Lebanon as the country persists with efforts to make steady progress towards restoring its institutions to their full functioning. Forming a Government, a key next step in that process, is within reach, but it requires Lebanese political decision makers to demonstrate leadership and prioritize national interests and needs. I count on the continued commitment of the Government of Lebanon to its international obligations, and I call upon all parties and actors to fully abide by resolutions 1559 (2004), 1680 (2006) and 1701 (2006). The United Nations will continue its efforts towards the full implementation of those and all other resolutions pertaining to Lebanon.

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Agenda item 39
Question of Palestine

Security Council
Seventy-third year

Identical letters dated 15 October 2018 from the Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Security Council

As Israel, the occupying Power, and its officials persist with their campaign of inflammatory rhetoric, misinformation and deliberate and dangerous propaganda against the Palestinian people and their leadership, I am compelled to draw your attention to a statement issued today, 15 October 2018, by the Mayor of Bethlehem, the Honorable Advocate Anton Salman, in response to comments made by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Bethlehem and the situation of Palestinian Christians (see annex).*

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex distributed as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 39, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Riyad **Mansour**
Ambassador
Permanent Observer

* The annex is being circulated in the language of submission only.

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Annex to the identical letters dated 15 October 2018 from the Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Security Council

Statement dated 15 October 2018 by the Mayor of Bethlehem, Advocate Anton Salman, on comments delivered by the Prime Minister of Israel, Benjamin Netanyahu, on Bethlehem and the situation of Palestinian Christians

Yesterday's statement by Israeli PM Benjamin Netanyahu is another Israeli attempt at distorting the reality of the Israeli occupation and particularly the effects that Israeli policies have had on the Palestinian Christian community since 1948.

If Mr. Netanyahu was concerned about the situation of Palestinian Christians, particularly in the Bethlehem Area, he would return the 22,000 dunums of Bethlehem land illegally annexed to Israel for expansion of colonial settlements. He would dismantle the annexation wall that divides Bethlehem from Jerusalem for the first time in 2000 years of Christianity and would stop imposing restrictions to Palestinian movement, including the thousands of Palestinian Christians living in exile and whose retur- is impossible due to the Israeli control over the Palestinian population registry. For example, in Jordan alone, a few kilometers away, there are at least 20,000 Palestinian Christians from the Bethlehem area that are denied family unification and even cannot enter the city, not even to celebrate Christmas, due to the Israeli military restrictions.

We would like to remind Mr. Netanyahu that it was himself who supported the building of one of the most damaging colonial-settlements that surround Bethlehem, Jabal Abu Ghneim (Har Homa), and that in 2015 he declared that by doing so he is preventing the connection between Bethlehem and Jerusalem. There are over 100,000 Israeli settlers surrounding Bethlehem from all its sides, reducing the area of Palestinian control over Bethlehem to less than 13% of the district, and making it impossible to plan for the future of our city. Furthermore, it was Mr. Netanyahu who voiced objection to declaring The Church of the Nativity and the Pilgrimage route as a World Heritage site and his policies of harassment were behind the decision of the Churches to close the Church of the Holy Sepulcher for three days in Jerusalem in objection to Church taxation policy.

His comment was also full of historical inaccuracies. It is shameful that while calling himself a "protector of Christianity", he would use Christians as a tool for his Islamophobic talking points. The decrease in the percentage of Christians in Bethlehem, as well as in the rest of Palestine, was provoked with the Nakba of 1948 and ongoing due to Israel's colonial plans and policies that started in 1967. This was also the case in West Jerusalem, from where a large Palestinian Christian community was expelled by Israel from Ein Karem, Talbiya, Qatamon, and other places. From 31,000 Christians in 1948, Jerusalem only has around 12,000 Christians today.

We would like to advise Mr. Netanyahu to stop using Christians as a tool to pinkwash the occupation. The best he could do for future of peace and coexistence, where the Christian community would thrive again, is to respect his obligations under International Law, including Security Council resolutions 478 on Jerusalem and 2334 on settlements, dismantling illegal colonial-settlements and the annexation Wall surrounding Bethlehem, including in the Cremisan Valley, fully end the occupation of Palestine and allow for the return of our people to their city. It is not the Palestinian government that prevents their return Mr. Netanyahu: It is your government.

I would like to use this occasion to call upon the heads of the churches in Jerusalem as well as to the Holy See to raise their voices against the use of religion for political purposes. It cannot be tolerated anymore that the Bible is used wrongfully in order to justify crimes and violations that go against the teachings of values spread by Our Lord Jesus Christ.

United Nations S/2018/922*

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Situation in the Central African Republic

Report of the Secretary-General

I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 2387 (2017), the Security Council extended the mandate of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) until 15 November 2018 and requested that I report on its implementation. The present report is submitted pursuant to that resolution.

2. Further to my initiative to reform peacekeeping and my Action for Peacekeeping initiative, I asked Juan Gabriel Valdés to lead an independent strategic review of MINUSCA. He undertook that review from June until September 2018, with 15 multidisciplinary experts from various agencies in the United Nations System, and visited the Central African Republic from 2 to 15 July. He consulted with a wide range of stakeholders, including President Faustin-Archange Touadéra, Prime Minister Simplice Sarandji and members of his Government, representatives of the National Assembly and main political parties, armed groups, civil society, women and youth groups, religious leaders and the Central African population, as well as members of the diplomatic community, including the African Union, the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), the European Union, MINUSCA and the United Nations country and humanitarian teams. In addition to Bangui, the team visited Bambari, Bangassou, Bouar, Bria and Kaga Bandoro, and sought consultations in Addis Ababa, Libreville, Paris, Washington, D.C. and New York. The main findings and recommendations of the review are included in the present report.

II. Context

3. Past peace agreements in the Central African Republic, supported by interventions by the subregion, the African Union and the United Nations, have fallen short of resolving the scourge of violence and conflict that have resulted from the systematically unaddressed and deep-rooted issues of poverty, inequality, impunity, marginalization, contested citizenship and discrimination. The State has struggled with its capacity and presence, resulting in difficulties in providing its citizens with basic services and security, and an economy based on natural wealth that benefits few. As a result, the country has faced a continual cycle of violence and instability, particularly in the remote north-east. The violence in 2013 and 2014 brought additional religious and intercommunal dimensions to the conflict; religion and ethnicity are still used to incite violence. Those combined factors led to the near

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collapse of the State, prompting the deployment of MINUSCA, following interventions by the African Union and by France.

4. The presence of MINUSCA has contributed to important successes, including the organization of the Bangui Forum on National Reconciliation and the presidential and legislative elections held in 2015 and 2016, which successfully returned the country to constitutional order. The Mission also prevents atrocities on a daily basis and continues to preserve and protect the legitimacy and territorial integrity of the State. However, four years into the deployment of MINUSCA, and despite significant investments by the international community, the crisis persists with a serious risk of reversal. It seems gridlocked owing to global, regional, national and local conflict drivers despite the progress achieved. The elections of 2015 and 2016, which were the first democratic, free and fair elections of their kind in the country, brought only a temporary reduction of violence. They did not generate the conditions or framework necessary for an inclusive peace process that would facilitate disarmament and reconciliation. In the months after the elections, the posture of armed groups hardened, amid unmet expectations of power-sharing arrangements and competition over control of territory and access to natural resources, while their attacks on civilians grew and profits from illicit economic activities remained largely unhindered.

5. Furthermore, after the elections, international and regional attention shifted to other critical crises. This was illustrated by the reduction in international forces in the country, which are essential for MINUSCA to carry out its peacekeeping mandate and prevent an expansion of armed groups. The region continued to play a significant role, while evolving geopolitical dynamics added to the complexity of the conflict. In that context, various mediation efforts were initiated. Most were eventually subsumed into the African Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation, under the auspices of the African Union and ECCAS, to which the United Nations committed its full support.

6. Early in 2017, the security situation deteriorated, primarily owing to political and security assumptions that did not materialize. In its resolution 2387 (2017), the Security Council focused the mandate of the Mission on supporting the political process with the objective to contain the security situation, protect civilians and create conditions to enable humanitarian access. Ten months later, that approach has been successful to a degree — the political process is on track, while the political strategy of MINUSCA has facilitated the stabilization of many areas and has contained the security situation in others. However, the political and security dynamics in the country have not changed, the lives of ordinary Central Africans have not improved meaningfully, and the violence has not stopped sustainably.

7. It was within that context that I co-chaired with President Touadéra, the President of the African Union Commission, Moussa Faki Mahamat, and the Secretary-General of ECCAS, Ahmad Allam-Mi, a high-level ministerial meeting on the Central African Republic in the margins of the seventy-third session of the General Assembly of the United Nations to discuss the way forward. At that meeting, participants expressed their support for President Touadéra's efforts to bring about peace, national reconciliation and development in his country, while recognizing that stability in the Central African Republic was crucial for regional stability. They recalled the need for all countries of the subregion to remain engaged constructively and for all mediation efforts to be closely coordinated within the African Initiative in order to strengthen the peace process.

III. Political situation

8. The African Initiative is widely recognized among all stakeholders as the main principle framework for the peace process in the Central African Republic, although its operationalization has taken time and it lacks the required resources. One year after the adoption of the Libreville road map, the Initiative's panel of facilitators concluded its "listening tours" with the 14 main armed groups. At the most recent meeting, held in Bouar from 28 to 30 August, the panel helped to harmonize the groups' demands, which were subsequently submitted to President Touadéra for consideration by the Government. This represents an important preparatory step towards dialogue between the Government and armed groups, tentatively scheduled for November. The panel also consulted two exiled former Heads of State, Francois Bozizé and Michel Djotodia. In July 2018, the Initiative, with support from the Peacebuilding Fund, organized training sessions to prepare armed groups, government representatives and political and social leaders for direct dialogue, with the support of the Community of Sant'Egidio and the African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes. The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) organized workshops and seminars to engage women and young people.

9. Civil society, members of Parliament and other national stakeholders, however, criticized the perceived lack of inclusiveness of the Initiative. There were concerns that limiting the dialogue to only 14 armed groups might have a negative impact on the popular support for and successful implementation of any eventual outcome. There were also concerns about the lack of coherence among regional, national and local initiatives, and that the interests of civilians and victims were not at the centre of the dialogue.

10. On 28 August 2018, a meeting was convened in Khartoum with the three main ex-Séléka factions and one anti-balaka faction, with the support of the Russian Federation. That followed an earlier meeting in Khartoum on 10 July that only the Front populaire pour la renaissance de la Centrafrique attended. The second meeting resulted in a declaration, by which armed factions pledged their support for peace and dialogue within the framework of the African Initiative. Although the Khartoum initiative initially raised concerns of parallel and uncoordinated dialogue processes, its outcome and the universal recognition of the African Initiative as the central peace endeavour could strengthen efforts in support of a national peace process. Nevertheless, the armed groups may have hardened their positions.

11. MINUSCA continued to make progress in implementing its political strategy in support of the Government, its reform efforts and the national peace process through local-level agreements tailored to each specific local context and prevailing armed groups. These agreements are supported by community dialogue and reconciliation initiatives; military and police operations, including targeted arrests; disarmament, demobilization and reintegration and community violence reduction programmes; as well as support for the extension of State authority.

12. In Bangassou, a local agreement was signed in April 2018, complemented by the arrest of militia leaders, disarmament through community violence reduction programmes, the deployment of units of the Central African armed forces trained by the European Union Training Mission and intercommunal dialogue by local leaders. Those efforts have produced a noticeable decline in attacks on civilians in recent months. In Bangui, intercommunal dialogue in the city's third district facilitated the gradual return of people displaced following Operation Sukula. Local peace and reconciliation processes in Markounda and Zemio have helped to reduce violence,

increase freedom of movement and facilitate the return of State authorities. Similarly, in Bouar, they have helped to eliminate illegal checkpoints, stop intercommunal violence and secure a commitment from the armed group Retour, réclamations, réhabilitation to demobilize and disarm as part of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme. In July, that group and anti-balaka leaders in Bouar destroyed 1,652 weapons that had been collected through community violence reduction programmes, symbolizing their commitment to disarming. The Government, with MINUSCA support, also established eight new local peace and reconciliation committees across the country.

13. The Government initiated preparations for elections scheduled for 2020 and 2021. Following its formal request for United Nations support, an electoral needs-assessment mission visited the country from 5 to 18 September. There, it evaluated the political, electoral and security environment, the electoral legal and institutional framework, women's political participation and the capacity and needs of various election stakeholders in order to develop recommendations for possible United Nations electoral support. In June, the National Elections Authority validated the draft electoral law at a workshop that had brought together political parties, national institutions, civil society and international partners; the draft law is pending submission by the Government to the National Assembly. On 6 July, the Government established a working group tasked with drafting a law to reform the National Elections Authority.

14. My Special Representative for Central Africa and Head of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa, François Louncény Fall, engaged with regional States in support of the African Initiative. On the margins of the 30 July Summit of Heads of State of ECCAS and the Economic Community of West African States, held in Lomé, my Special Representative held consultations with President Touadéra, Mr. Faki Mahamat and the Chair of ECCAS, President Ali Bongo Ondimba of Gabon. In his regular consultations with regional Heads of State, he continued to advocate for stronger regional relations, including through activating bilateral mixed commissions, to address cross-border issues.

IV. Security situation

15. Since 2014, the security situation outside the capital has been characterized by continued instability, with armed groups active in most of the country and regularly attacking civilians, peacekeepers and humanitarians. Intensified clashes between armed groups continue to fuel intercommunal tensions and remain the primary source of insecurity and threat against civilians, especially women and children. Notwithstanding the arms embargo and Kimberley Process ban, armed groups continue to benefit from the illegal exploitation of natural resources, taxation through illegal checkpoints and arms trafficking. As a result, their positions have strengthened outside the capital with little repercussion.

16. During the reporting period, the number of security incidents decreased in Bangui, Bangassou and several western prefectures. However, clashes between armed groups, particularly in the centre and south-east, continued. From June to August, near Mbrès, Nana-Gribizi prefecture, the Front populaire pour la renaissance de la Centrafrique and the Mouvement patriotique pour la Centrafrique clashed with anti-balaka fighters, who continued to attack Muslim traders. Front populaire-aligned militia looted 15 villages and burned more than 2,000 houses during those clashes, displacing thousands of civilians. Late in July, three Russian journalists were killed on the Dekoa-Sibut axis, in Kémo Prefecture, in circumstances not yet fully established; national authorities are investigating with MINUSCA support. Early in

August, the Front populaire attacked and burned 11 villages along the Ira-Banda axis, south of Bria, which is rich in natural resources. The Union pour la paix en Centrafrique and anti-balaka-associated militias continued to fight in Ouaka and Basse-Kotto. Anti-balaka-associated fighters routinely targeted MINUSCA convoys in Nana-Gribizi, Ouaka, Basse-Kotto and Mbomou Prefectures. Early in September, several internally displaced persons were killed in Bria following violent clashes between the Front populaire and anti-balaka armed groups.

17. In the north-west, MINUSCA operations and the deployment of a company from the Central African armed forces, eliminated the Mouvement national pour la libération de la Centrafrique presence in Ouham-Pendé, leading to a reduction in attacks on civilians and allowing the return of most displaced persons who had sought refuge in Paoua in early 2018. The Mission's military operations and cooperation between the Government of the Central African Republic and the Government of Cameroon helped to limit attacks on civilians by Siriri, a recently formed local militia engaged in extensive cattle theft. Intercommunal violence between pastoralists and farmers, and their related armed groups, continued in Ouaka and Basse-Kotto, with frequent attacks on civilians and MINUSCA. The Mission's response has been severely hampered by its lack of presence in some of those areas and the extremely difficult road and logistics conditions.

18. Ex-Séléka groups increased efforts to coordinate their illicit economic activities. On 5 August 2018, representatives of the Union pour la paix en Centrafrique, the Front populaire pour la renaissance de la Centrafrique and the Mouvement patriotique pour la Centrafrique met in Moyenne Sido, a town that straddles the border with Chad. They agreed to establish a "mixed force" to fight banditry and control transhumance corridors.

Safety and security of United Nations personnel

19. Security remains a serious challenge for United Nations personnel. During the reporting period, 132 security incidents were recorded, including 34 attacks and ambushes by armed groups and criminal gangs targeting United Nations personnel, premises, equipment and convoys, which resulted in the death of one peacekeeper in Alindao, Basse-Kotto Prefecture. Five cases of death threats against and harassment of the United Nations civilian personnel were reported, and attributed to armed and criminal groups, as well as two separate incidents in which United Nations civilian personnel were detained by internal security forces and an armed group, respectively. In total, 26 civilian and military personnel were injured; 20 in ambushes and hostile attacks by armed groups and 6 in road traffic accidents. Seven demonstrations against the United Nations were held in Bangui and other towns. One peacekeeper died from illness.

Operationalization of national defence and internal security forces

20. Out of a total of 7,087 verified soldiers of the Central African armed forces, 243 have been deployed in Am Dafok, Boali, Bouar and Moungounba without MINUSCA or partner support. A total of 612 personnel trained by the European Union Training Mission have so far been deployed in Bangassou, Bouar, Dekoa, Obo, Paoua and Sibut, working alongside MINUSCA. The Central African armed forces has received contributions from bilateral partners, including armaments, vehicles, communications and other equipment. MINUSCA is responsible for the ad hoc supplies of fuel in Bangassou, Obo and Paoua, which it then receives in the same quantities by the Government in Bangui. The majority of the 3,232 police and gendarme officers remain in Bangui owing to a lack of essential equipment and logistics necessary to deploy new recruits throughout the country as planned.

21. The leadership of the Central African armed forces has so far maintained high levels of discipline in the deployed units, particularly where accompanied by MINUSCA. Cases of individual misconduct have been adequately managed by the Military General Inspector and the Military Prosecutor's Office. Some human rights violations attributed to the Central African armed forces have been reported; the most serious case being an alleged excessive use of force against an unarmed civilian crowd on 12 August 2018 in the village of Wapo, near Berberati, where MINUSCA does not accompany the armed forces. Other reported violations have included theft, harassment, threats, physical aggression and extortion. Local communities have shown a positive perception of the Central African armed forces, requesting additional deployments, particularly in the Paoua area, where displaced persons started to return. Several ex-Séléka factions continue to oppose strongly the deployments of Central African armed forces.

22. In July 2018, the Government organized a donors' round table, supported by UNDP and co-organized by the European Union Training Mission and MINUSCA, on the national defence and security forces, at which donors confirmed their pledges. In line with President Touadéra's commitments, efforts are under way to ensure the long-term payment and sustainment of those forces. MINUSCA continues to sensitize the forces on human rights and international humanitarian law.

V. Humanitarian situation

23. The country is second to last on the Human Development Index. More than half the population require humanitarian assistance. Non-governmental organizations continue to perform their life-saving work in an extremely dire and increasingly dangerous environment, de facto replacing the State in delivering basic services in some areas. The spike in incidents affecting humanitarian workers has resulted in severe access constraints and the temporary suspension of activities in several areas. Efforts to address the dire humanitarian situation in a sustainable manner have not moved forward in the absence of development and recovery partners and opportunities, owing to continued insecurity and the lack of national absorption and delivery capacity. The country therefore remains on the verge of a humanitarian crisis.

24. There are record levels of displacement. As at 1 October 2018, there were more than 616,000 internally displaced persons and 572,062 refugees. More than one in four Central Africans remain displaced. Continued insecurity exacerbates food insecurity, and malnutrition and has a disproportionate effect on women and children in terms of broader protection concerns, including gender-based violence and lack of income-generation opportunities.

25. As at 1 October, only 36 per cent of the $515.6 million of the 2018 Humanitarian Response Plan had been funded, leaving a deficit of $330 million to respond to the needs of 2.5 million people.

26. So far in 2018, 7 humanitarian workers have been killed and 18 injured by hostile action, while 294 security incidents against humanitarian actors or organizations have been reported.

VI. Protection of civilians

27. As a result of armed group clashes, attacks on civilians and weak State capacity, the country continued to suffer one of the worst protection crises globally. That is indicative of serious structural flaws, protection gaps and institutional shortcomings, including a lack of national ownership and responsibility.

28. Through its efforts, MINUSCA aided in the protection of civilians in various parts of the country where it is present, including through local peace initiatives and advocacy in Haute Kotto, Nana-Mambere, Mambéré-Kadéï, Mboumou, Ouham and Ouham-Pendé Prefectures, backed by robust military action and arrests, as required. The Mission has strengthened its early warning systems and improved military-civilian collaboration, with the recruitment of 26 additional community liaison assistants and the establishment of a network of trained protection focal points. Nevertheless, most of its protection functions are through physical protection by MINUSCA as a result of insufficient preventive measures. The sustainability of those efforts remains fragile, particularly as national stakeholders continue to view the protection of civilians primarily as the responsibility of the Mission alone, especially outside Bangui and in areas where State institutions are minimal or not present. There has been some politically motivated public criticism of the capacity of MINUSCA and its willingness to protect civilians or forcibly disarm armed groups.

VII. Extension of State authority and the rule of law

29. The challenges in extending the State's authority, in view of the historical patterns of a lean State presence in rural areas and its extremely limited resources, are immense. Despite comprehensive efforts by MINUSCA, with the United Nations country team, and investments by other partners, the State remains largely unable to provide basic services and infrastructure to the population outside Bangui owing to a lack of means and capacities as well as logistical constraints.

Extension of State authority

30. During the reporting period, several initiatives were undertaken to help the Government to re-establish the rule of law and State authority and to provide services in response to citizens' request. MINUSCA and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) supported the organization of the 2018 national baccalauréat exams. MINUSCA and UNDP worked with the Government to develop "Lisango 2.0", a software to facilitate the planning of civil servant deployments. In August, five new prefects, including three women, were nominated to replace the retired prefects of Bamingui-Bangoran, Basse-Kotto, Mbomou, Nana-Gribizi and Nana-Mambéré.

Justice and the rule of law

31. The Special Criminal Court rules of procedure and evidence were promulgated on 2 July 2018. The Court is actively working, with MINUSCA support, to develop its prosecutorial and case selection strategy. The judiciary resumed criminal sessions in several areas, with support from MINUSCA and UNDP. The Bangui Court of Appeal held its second criminal session from 16 July to 31 August, in which 15 cases were heard, including several related to the conflict. In August, the Bossangoa High Court resumed its criminal sessions, which had been suspended since 2013. However, in general the capacity and functioning of other national judicial and corrections structures, particularly outside Bangui, remained limited.

32. The Mission continued to support the demilitarization of prisons, including the recruitment of 150 out of a total of 300 prison officers. The Mission apprehended nine high-profile individuals using its urgent temporary measures and supported the transfer to Bangui of 54 detainees, including anti-balaka leader Pino-Pino, who had been accused of involvement in attacks against civilians and peacekeepers in May 2017.

Disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation

33. MINUSCA is supporting the Government's launch of its disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme, starting in the west with seven armed groups, and continued to expand community violence reduction programmes in six locations for 5,100 beneficiaries. The Government continued to engage with other armed groups to reach further agreements and extend disarmament and demobilization to other parts of the country.

Security sector reform

34. On 4 July 2018, the National Assembly adopted a law establishing a High Council on Security to ensure greater accountability and civilian oversight over the security sector. On 24 August, the President approved the Government's proposal to reserve 10 per cent of new posts in the Central African armed forces and security forces for former combatants, until 2021. At the request of the Government, MINUSCA started to support the recruitment of 1,023 Central African armed forces personnel, using quotas to ensure fair geographic and gender balance. In August, the European Union Training Mission concluded the training of the third infantry battalion of the Central African armed forces. On 30 July, the mandate of the European Union Training Mission was extended until 19 September 2020.

35. The 500 new police and gendarmerie recruits were scheduled to complete their general training and start specialized training by the end of October 2018. MINUSCA, through the Mine Action Service, continued to support weapons and ammunition management by assisting the national defence and security forces with infrastructure planning and refresher training.

VIII. Human rights and the fight against impunity

36. Since 2017, the number of documented human rights violations by armed groups and security forces has considerably increased. However, MINUSCA has noted a decrease in civilian deaths linked to the conflict since January 2018, primarily owing to a decline in intercommunal violence. During the reporting period, MINUSCA documented 597 new cases of grave human rights violations and breaches to international humanitarian law affecting 1,077 victims. Armed groups were responsible for of the vast majority of those cases, mainly in Haute-Kotto, Haut Mbomou, Mambéré Kadéi and Ouaka. The most widespread violations remain killings, injuries, death threats, cruel and inhuman treatment and conflict-related sexual violence, as well as the deprivation of liberty, looting and the occupation of and attacks on health centres and places of worship.

37. In June, the High Council on Communication developed a national action plan on preventing public incitement to violence and hate speech, with MINUSCA support. However, the levels of hate speech and incitement to violence remained high, with no noticeable change.

38. The Steering Committee tasked with establishing the truth, justice, reparations and reconciliation commission continued to prepare a plan for national consultations, with United Nations support. Efforts were also under way to develop a transitional justice strategy in support of the African Initiative.

Child protection

39. Reports continued of the killing, maiming and recruitment of children by armed groups, as well as attacks against schools and hospitals. The denial of humanitarian access was noted as particularly problematic in Kaga Bandoro.

Conflict-related sexual violence

40. There was an increase in the number of incidents of sexual violence, including conflict-related, reported by victims to the national police rapid intervention unit, yet difficulties remained in ensuring rapid trials for accused perpetrators.

IX. Socioeconomic situation

41. Continued insecurity continued to have a negative impact on the country's macroeconomic outlook and prospects for economic performance. Real growth of gross domestic product had stagnated at 4 per cent in 2017, compared with the initial projection of 5.3 per cent. The projection for 2018 was of 4.2 per cent. Socioeconomic growth was further hampered by the continued absence of basic infrastructure and lack of investment, despite support by international financial institutions.

42. MINUSCA and the United Nations country team, along with other partners, have supported the Government in the implementation of the National Recovery and Peacebuilding Plan for the period 2017–2021, to which donors have pledged some $2.2 billion. The biannual review in June and July showed an increase in the delivery rate of funds to 49 per cent, although disbursement remained slow. The Mutual Engagement Framework biannual review highlighted the need to strengthen national capacities at all levels and to improve national ownership of the Plan and Framework. It highlighted the urgent actions required to achieve peacebuilding priorities, including the swift adoption of laws and regulations to launch the preparation for elections and further deployments of the Central African armed forces and internal security forces alongside MINUSCA. Efforts continued for the development of the sectoral strategies, policies, plans and frameworks that were essential for accelerating the programming and delivery of the resources mobilized so far and for translating them into peace dividends for the population.

43. The International Monetary Fund reviewed the country's Extended Credit Facility Agreement and approved in July a disbursement of $32.1 million. A portion would be used to pay 2003 salary arrears of civil servants and the gradual settlement of domestic debt with private companies. In June, the National Assembly adopted a revised finance bill that increased social spending and public investments.

X. Mission capacities

44. The context and assumptions that defined the establishment of MINUSCA continue to have an impact on the Mission's capacities four years later. MINUSCA has been deployed to support national authorities when the State has been weak or non-existent. That resulted in often unrealistic expectations on what the Mission could achieve. In the absence of sufficient partners, MINUSCA has often been expected to substitute for others, diverting its efforts and scarce resources away from its priority mandated tasks. Equally important, a range of factors have limited the development of a sufficiently comprehensive political strategy supported by an aligned security strategy. Implementation of the Mission's mandate has been further hampered by the challenges in ensuring that resources are aligned with the extremely difficult operational and logistics environment. However, it is important to recognize the important achievements of the Mission and improvements in terms of capabilities and enablers. Most interlocutors of the independent strategic review have stated that MINUSCA has prevented mass atrocities and the collapse of the State, and its presence remains vital.

A. Military

45. As at 1 October, MINUSCA had deployed 11,170 military personnel, 3.17 per cent of whom were women. That figure represents 95.88 per cent of the total authorized strength of 11,650 personnel. The MINUSCA force currently comprises 10 infantry battalions, two quick-reaction battle groups, a reserve battalion, a special forces company, a quick-reaction force company and several enabling units, including a military police company, five engineering companies, a heavy transport company, three level-II hospitals, a level-1-plus forward surgery module and three helicopter units, including a combat helicopter unit. The Mission, with guidance from United Nations Headquarters, is reviewing its capabilities and response procedures in order to improve the casualty evacuation support.

46. As at 1 October 2018, a total of 750 troops out of the 900 authorized by the Security Council were operational. The remaining troops are expected to reach full operational capability by end of November, with specialized equipment, including reconnaissance and high-mobility armoured vehicles, as well as enablers, such as engineering vehicles, logistics and medical equipment. MINUSCA will reinforce its military posture with two highly mobile battalions, designed as joint task forces composed of three companies, capable of deploying simultaneously and operating autonomously, with integrated force multipliers. They will act as quick-reaction forces, tasked to address particularly difficult security situations.

B. Police

47. As at 1 October, MINUSCA had deployed 1,918 police personnel, representing 92.21 per cent of the authorized strength of 2,080. That number comprised 385 individual police officers, including 52 women, representing 96.25 per cent of the authorized strength of 400. Ten formed police units and two protection support units comprising 1,533 officers, including 102 women, were also deployed, representing 91.25 per cent of the authorized strength of 1,680. The transformation of the police protection unit into a formed unit remained pending owing to equipment constraints of the contributing country. Once addressed, the more mobile unit will deploy to Berberati and Bossangoa.

C. Civilian personnel

48. As at 1 October, MINUSCA had deployed 1,384 civilian personnel (1,151 staff members and 233 United Nations Volunteers) representing 90 per cent of the total 1,524 authorized positions. Furthermore, 273 women constituted 23.7 per cent of the civilian personnel, with 21.5 per cent in positions at the P-5 level or higher.

D. Status-of-forces agreement

49. The Mission continues to work closely with the Government to address a number of violations related to the status-of-forces agreement, including the import of critical equipment.

E. Efforts to optimize performance

50. The Mission has strengthened its efforts to address performance in a series of actions encompassing training, equipment, evaluation and leadership. The Mission is

serving as a pilot for the implementation of the Comprehensive Performance Assessment System of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, and is developing indicators to measure whole-of-mission performance against its strategic objectives. Since the launch in September 2017 of the online military performance assessment tool, MINUSCA has conducted evaluations of several units, which were mostly assessed as satisfactory, and it is now implementing performance improvement plans as needed, including on the basis of those evaluations. MINUSCA has been an early adopter of innovative technologies in support of operations and force protection. It has made progress in implementing the recommendations contained in the report on the independent investigation by Brigadier General (Retired) Amoussou to improve the Mission's response to protect civilians, as well as the action plan to reduce peacekeeper fatalities following the report by Lieutenant General (Retired) dos Santos Cruz,[1] which has already produced results, with six peacekeeper casualties in 2018 due to malicious acts, compared to 12 in the same period in 2017, although injuries have increased to 34 in 2018 from 18 in 2017. MINUSCA has also made significant improvements in personnel accommodation.

F. Serious misconduct, including sexual exploitation and abuse

51. Nine new allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse were recorded against MINUSCA forces between 15 June and 1 October 2018 and are pending investigation by the relevant contributing countries and the United Nations. MINUSCA, in collaboration with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), UNICEF and the United Nations Population Fund, referred 19 victims for appropriate assistance, all from newly reported allegations. MINUSCA managers have signed an accountability compact pledging their commitment to preventing and responding to sexual exploitation and abuse and other prohibited conduct. In September, MINUSCA, along with United Nations agencies and national and international humanitarian organizations, signed an information-sharing protocol on sexual exploitation and abuse that clarifies and strengthens paths for timely reporting, referral and multisectoral assistance to victims. In accordance with the measures regarding sexual exploitation and abuse outlined by the Security Council in its resolution 2272 (2016), the United Nations has conducted joint technical review visits to two troop-contributing countries for MINUSCA to strengthen the exchange of information regarding pending allegations of such exploitation and abuse and to better prepare troops for deployment. In addition, the internal committee established to implement that resolution continues to monitor all troop- and police-contributing countries deployed in MINUSCA to identify areas of concerns and relevant actions to be taken.

XI. Recommendations, including for renewing the mandate of MINUSCA

52. The independent strategic review recommended that a range of measures be taken, in line with my Action for Peacekeeping initiative, including the renewal of the mandate of MINUSCA, which will enable the Mission to move from containment to transformation in critical areas. As such, the refocusing and sequencing of the Mission's priorities and core tasks in accordance with resolution 2387 (2017) remain valid. However, in the light of the current context, some of its tasks would need to be strengthened, such as political support to the peace process and security strategy, two

[1] Available at https://peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/improving_security_of_united_nations_peacekeepers_report.pdf.

new tasks would be recommended — limited logistical support to national defence and security forces and for the electoral process — and other current mandated tasks would be streamlined.

53. To improve the chances of success of the African Initiative-led political process, all actors must give a higher priority to the peace process. That will require renewed commitment to the African Initiative-led process, the democratic legitimacy of President Touadéra and the territorial integrity of the State by the international community and countries of the region, as emphasized at the high-level ministerial meeting held on 27 September.

54. That will also require a strengthened and more inclusive African Initiative-led process as the main principle framework for the peace process, transformed into a comprehensive process that enjoys broad popular support and legitimacy and that takes into account national and regional dimensions. Additional efforts will be required to ensure sustained and coherent regional engagement, including the joint appointment by the United Nations and African Union of a prominent person as a guarantor of the peace process and to facilitate stronger regional engagement.

55. The United Nations, in particular MINUSCA, should have a stronger role in the peace process. MINUSCA must be firmly anchored within it through a greater political role in the African Initiative and by closely aligning the efforts of the Mission to the peace process. To that end, my Special Representative for the Central African Republic was recently included in the panel of facilitators, as agreed with the African Union. I have also asked MINUSCA to reinforce its priority mandated task to support the political process by increasing its substantive and mediation support to the Initiative to complement its ongoing technical, logistical and security support. I have further requested MINUSCA to align its political and security strategies to the African Initiative, guaranteeing a more coherent peace process that connects local and national peace efforts with the ongoing efforts to advance disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, the security sector reform, the fight against impunity and the restoration of State authority, while ensuring that the efforts of the African Initiative are informed by developments on the political, security, human rights, humanitarian and protection fronts. That is particularly important, since MINUSCA will be called upon to support the implementation of an eventual outcome.

56. To that end, I recommend that structural adjustments be made and capacities be strengthened, particularly political and strategic communications, including to better support the good offices of my Special Representative. A common and comprehensive strategic communications and outreach plan by the Government, the African Initiative and MINUSCA would facilitate a better understanding of local perceptions and motivations, inform the population about the peace process, prepare for the electoral process, explain the Mission's mandate and its actions and strengthen its monitoring of media and hate speech.

57. To achieve stronger commitments and more united efforts in support of the peace process, the coordination and partnership between the African Union, the United Nations, ECCAS and all other partners should be strengthened through the International Support Group as well as its in-country mechanism. An inclusive, transparent and coherent approach between all partners is the only way forward. The mandate of MINUSCA should reflect that stronger convening and coordinating role, in parallel with stronger Government capacity for donor coordination.

58. There must be dialogue with all armed groups, with a clear political or administrative objective. At the same time, armed actors engaged in the peace process should honour their commitment to peaceful dialogue and stop the illicit exploitation of economic resources, illegal taxation and attacks on civilians, peacekeepers and humanitarian workers. Stakeholders should agree on the typology of the different

armed and criminal groups, so as to tailor approaches to their specific nature and interests. That will ensure that engagement strategies adequately balance national, regional and international tools and utilize dialogue, robust military and police action, the Mission's urgent temporary measures and the sanctions regime for those who continue to attack civilians and use violence to impede the country's stabilization.

59. Closer linkages between the peace process and justice are required. Transitional justice aimed at reconciliation should be embedded within the political process, while ensuring accountability and effective redress for victims, and support for national reconciliation and social cohesion, including for the return of those forcibly displaced. While different views on amnesty persist, transitional justice mechanisms should include judicial and non-judicial mechanisms through comprehensive, victim-centred and gender-sensitive approaches based on human rights principles. The United Nations, particularly MINUSCA, should continue to support the Government and the African Initiative on this.

60. Stronger support to national judicial and corrections institutions is required, in addition to continuing support to the Special Criminal Court. The coordination of initiatives to strengthen that sector should be enhanced, including judicial capacities, victim and witness protection and prosecutorial strategies. MINUSCA should continue its efforts to arrest, using its urgent temporary measures, and facilitate the investigation, prosecution and detention of those who obstruct the peace process and have committed serious crimes.

61. An inclusive and transparent electoral process leading to the 2020–2021 elections can serve as an integral part of the political process. It should help to address some root causes of conflict by fostering nation-building and reconciliation, and also by facilitating the safe, voluntary and dignified return of refugees and internally displaced persons and helping to ensure their participation in the political process and elections. That would require that local elections be prioritized as much as legislative and presidential elections, taking into account the fact that that the most recent local elections were held in 1988, and that regional elections have never been held. The prospect of the upcoming elections could also help to provide the required impetus in the implementation of key processes otherwise not linked per se to the electoral process, such as decentralization, transitional justice and the extension of State authority, including the redeployment of the Central African armed forces, police and gendarmerie.

62. Should the Council so authorize, MINUSCA could support the electoral process through: (a) good offices by my Special Representative; (b) technical, operational, logistics and security support and capacity-building, particularly to the National Election Commission for the planning and conduct of the next presidential, legislative and local elections; and (c) coordination of international electoral support. Such support would need to begin as soon as possible in order to control costs and ensure that critical processes are completed on time, including to ensure the representation of minorities and participation of displaced persons and refugees. Moreover, Central Africans have indicated their strong wish to adhere to the constitutional timeline. Central Africans must have an electoral process that they can support, including financially, to ensure ownership and for democracy to truly take root. United Nations support for the elections must therefore foster greater national capacity and ensure that Central Africans can support their own elections in the future, thus providing a perspective for reduced reliance on international support in the future.

63. The root causes of the conflict and issues of priority to the Central African people — the greatest victims of the crisis — must be at the heart of the peace process and the international community's efforts, including on security, justice, reconciliation, national identity as well as governance and access to national

resources and equal socioeconomic opportunities. It should be accompanied by material improvements for the population's well-being. Concrete peace dividends would reinforce the legitimacy of the process and its support from Central Africans and would also help to ensure its successful implementation. Implementation of the National Recovery and Peacebuilding Plan should therefore be accelerated. To that end, the United Nations and other partners should support government efforts through the secretariat of the National Plan in boosting project development and selection and in accelerating their delivery and implementation in the prefectures.

64. Neither the Government, MINUSCA nor partners can individually resolve the root causes of the crisis and prevent a relapse into conflict. Sustained strong partnerships among peace, security and development actors as well as with the private sector and international financial institutions are crucial. Peacebuilding activities should have close linkages to development interventions, requiring partner commitment to the country's peacebuilding priorities and sufficient resources for the United Nations system to deliver.

65. The population needs greater protection from threats. MINUSCA cannot sustainably protect civilians by itself, nor can it do so countrywide. First and foremost, national authorities bear the primary responsibility to protect civilians. They must be given greater support to develop the capacity to assume their responsibilities as quickly as possible. A comprehensive strategy on the protection of civilians should be developed involving all relevant actors, particularly national authorities, as well as the United Nations, humanitarian actors and other partners. MINUSCA will further strengthen a "whole-of-UN" approach to protecting civilians, while continuing to improve performance, including by systematically undertaking civilian risk assessments and reviews after its military operations.

66. The peace process in the Central African Republic is contingent on security conditions conducive for dialogue. The effective negotiation and implementation of any outcome will need to be backed by credible, adequate and sustained military pressure to prevent any further strengthening or expansion of the armed groups. This should include putting an end to their illicit economic activities and to encourage their constructive participation in the peace process and in elections. Therefore, a comprehensive national security strategy aligned to the peace process is essential. In addition to accelerating security sector reform, greater support from MINUSCA, the European Union and other partners is required for the deployment and operationalization of the national defence and internal security forces that will face military and criminal threats. Such support also remains essential for the eventual exit of MINUSCA. Should the Security Council so authorize, MINUSCA, together with its partners, could provide limited logistical support to the Central African armed forces, police and gendarmerie, further to its already mandated support, in line with the objectives in my letter dated 15 May addressed to the Security Council (S/2018/463) and in compliance with the United Nations human rights due diligence policy. To ensure unity of purpose, the International Support Group is the most logical forum to bring together these efforts at the international level to ensure a shared vision and coherent support to the security forces.

67. In addition to the Mission's military and police operations, its comprehensive security strategy will make fuller use of non-military United Nations capacities and strategies, such as (a) the extension of State authority; (b) security sector reform; (c) disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes; (d) community violence reduction programmes; and (e) the enhancement of criminal justice and civilian capacity to protect civilians, as MINUSCA has done in its local-level engagement efforts to address violence unrelated to the main armed groups has done. Human rights should be mainstreamed through all of those strategies and activities. MINUSCA and OHCHR will ensure that human rights, as well as concerns relating

to the protection of women and children, are integrated at the regional level, in the overall strategy of the Mission and in United Nations humanitarian and country team strategies, including in local agreements and the African Initiative-led process.

68. As MINUSCA is recognized as the de facto primary security provider, it will shift to a more dynamic posture to align its security capacities fully with and to enhance its operational efficiency in support of the peace process and in accordance with the Central African Republic context and environment. MINUSCA is clearly overstretched, despite the welcome increase in authorized strength by the Security Council in 2017. I will therefore aim to improve the Mission's performance, without an increase in authorized strength. That will involve, inter alia, establishing and implementing a performance management mechanism for contingents and leadership; maximizing the use of innovative technologies; continuing to enforce my zero-tolerance policy on sexual exploitation and abuse; reducing the number of bases and camps; and developing a code of conduct for uniformed personnel and guidelines on the secular nature of peacekeeping, while improving people-centred peacekeeping and community outreach.

69. Those efforts will not be possible without the generation of the right troops with the right equipment and posture to be more mobile, proactive and agile. MINUSCA requires troops with specialized equipment, including reconnaissance and high-mobility armoured vehicles, and with integrated enablers and force multipliers, in order to become more flexible and mobile, with battalions comprising self-sustained companies able to react quickly and simultaneously in different areas. It has proved difficult to generate such specialized capacities, despite considerable efforts.

70. Generating the right capabilities for MINUSCA alone is insufficient to enhance the effectiveness of mandate implementation. Nor will it provide long-term benefits to the Central Africans themselves. The extremely difficult environment in the country cannot be underestimated, such as the continued lack of road and air infrastructure. The latter can only be improved through heavy investment and a multifaceted strategy to address the country's massive infrastructure needs, incorporating all relevant partners and stakeholders.

71. The crisis in the Central African Republic and the complex dynamics in the Central African region cannot be separated from each other. The regional dimensions of conflict should inform the country-specific strategy and vice versa. Therefore, the United Nations system, together with partners, will prepare a comprehensive regional analysis of bilateral and common interests of the Central African Republic and its neighbours and assess opportunities for resolving issues jointly. That should improve the anticipation and prevention of possible risks to regional stability. It could also help regional prevention efforts, such as operationalizing the mixed commissions to better control cross-border threats, including transhumance-related violence and transnational illegal trafficking, and promote bilateral cooperation for peace and development. The regional analysis would further be used to address the war economy using all available mechanisms, including better enforcement of the sanctions regime. MINUSCA, the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa and all relevant United Nations entities and actors in the region would work closely together on such regional initiatives.

72. Given the significance of the war economy, particularly the illicit exploitation of natural resources, the Government and developments partners should urgently address that issue comprehensively. Based on comparative advantages, other partners would be better placed to support the Government in developing such a strategy. MINUSCA on the other hand could support relevant provisions of the peace process related to illicit exploitation and decentralization, as appropriate.

XII. Financial aspects

73. The General Assembly, by its resolution 72/290, appropriated the amount of $930.2 million for the maintenance of MINUSCA for the period from 1 July 2018 to 30 June 2019. As at 10 October, unpaid assessed contributions to the Special Account for MINUSCA amounted to $185.5 million. The total outstanding assessed contributions for all peacekeeping operations as at that date amounted to $1,826.9 million. Reimbursement of troop and formed police costs has been made for the period up to 30 July 2018, while reimbursement of the costs of contingent-owned equipment has been made for the period up to 30 June 2018, in accordance with the quarterly payment schedule.

XIII. Observations

74. Since 2013, when the Central African Republic was once again engulfed in crisis, notable progress has been achieved. Of particular importance is the return to constitutional order, advances in the extension of the State authority and the reduction of violence in several prefectures. However, one year ago, I warned that the conflict had escalated and that if the trend continued there was a serious risk of reversal, with catastrophic consequences. One year later, the strategy outlined in resolution 2387 (2017) has borne fruit, and the situation has been contained. I welcome these positive developments, which are the result of steady Government efforts with the support of the international community, including the United Nations, particularly MINUSCA.

75. However, the situation remains extremely fragile, and the risk of reversal remains real. There are also worrying signs that expediency may take precedence over durable peace and stability, in a context where people are still being killed, injured and displaced; where homes and communities are destroyed and the latter manipulated into violence against each other; and where hate speech continues to incite violence. Looking ahead, we must now work more closely together to transform the political and security context and support national efforts to lead the country from war to peace.

76. It was within that context that I co-chaired — with President Touadéra, Mr. Faki Mahamat and Mr. Allam-Mi — a high-level ministerial meeting on the Central African Republic in the margins of the seventy-third session of the General Assembly, in partnership with the European Union and the World Bank. I was heartened to see the high level of support participants demonstrated for the Central African Republic and for the African Initiative, which they stressed was the main framework for the peace process.

77. Addressing the country's persistent crisis is only possible through a political solution, and I applaud the progress made by the African Initiative-led peace process. There are now valuable opportunities to bring it to fruition ahead of the next round of elections and to prevent further violence or an aggravation of the situation. I therefore urge all stakeholders to prioritize the peace process. I strongly welcome the commitment by regional actors and the international community to include all peace initiatives within the framework of the African Initiative to ensure coherence of the peace process and to reinforce dialogue.

78. I commend the role and efforts of MINUSCA in supporting the peace process, which will be even greater as we move forward together. That is also why the United Nations and the African Union will aim to achieve a greater unity of purpose in the peace process and work more closely together to maximize comparative advantages, such as the Mission's good offices, security posture, field presence and substantive

expertise, including on disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, security sector reform and transitional justice.

79. In addition, Mr. Faki Mahamat and I have agreed jointly to nominate a prominent figure as a guarantor of the peace process and to help promote efforts for the success of the African Initiative in liaison with all partners of the Central African Republic, particularly those from the region. That measure symbolizes our strengthened engagement by the United Nations and the African Union and will facilitate enhanced regional engagement.

80. As the peace process unfolds, the Central African people continue to suffer. Bringing peace and stability will take time. We cannot afford another failed peace process — for the people, the country and the entire region, the risk is too high. It is imperative that rapid and meaningful improvements in the lives of Central Africans are realized and violence ends. Comprehensive progress will require the involvement of broader segments of society in the peace process. Indeed, the Central African people, the main victims of these recurrent cycles of violence, especially women and young people, have historically been largely excluded from peace processes and their outcomes. I therefore look to the leadership of the Government and the African Initiative to put in place measures to ensure the success of the peace process. I urge all stakeholders to support and show commitment to the peace process, and to ensure that it takes into account the valid and deeply rooted concerns of the people, which must be at the heart of any sustainable solution. At the same time, a peace process cannot be rushed; negotiations on grievances should be given the time they need to result in a feasible and sustainable road map of the way ahead.

81. As we have learned from the past, the peace process must prioritize and address — with the support of all national and regional actors — the issues at the root of the crisis. These are not technical or administrative matters; as such, they must be firmly anchored into an inclusive peace and reconciliation process that enjoys broad popular support and ownership. The security and well-being of civilians should be the starting point of any dialogue. I remain deeply concerned that violent competition over illicit economies between armed groups continues to cause the loss of innocent lives, serious human rights violations and an aggravation of the already fragile humanitarian situation. I call for a renewed commitment by armed groups to an immediate cessation of hostilities, to remove their armed presence from populated areas and to halt any further expansion, recruitment and illicit activities. That would demonstrate their good faith to genuinely participate in the peace process, while also bringing a perspective of safety and security to the people. Without that commitment translated into reality on the ground, it is difficult to visualize a peace process that could end the violence.

82. I am disappointed to see that, despite laudable efforts over the past few years, armed groups have retained, if not strengthened, their positions and influence in their respective strongholds and continue to benefit from illicit taxation and illegal exploitation of natural resources. The "war economy", one of the main conflict drivers, must end. Drastic measures to stop such activities are required, necessitating the political will and support of national and regional authorities. I am concerned by the worrisome prospect of broad, ungoverned spaces in the Central African Republic and in the region, which could be used by some actors for violent extremism. Decisive actions are essential, including regional mechanisms to better coordinate necessary measures. The United Nations will continue to support such efforts.

83. I continue to be shocked and outraged by the egregious acts of violence against civilians, peacekeepers and humanitarian workers. I condemn in the strongest terms such unacceptable attacks, some of which may constitute war crimes. I reiterate my calls to the Central African Republic authorities to investigate swiftly and prosecute

the perpetrators. I also recognize and commend the efforts by the Government, with the support of MINUSCA and that of its neighbours, to bring some of the perpetrators of those heinous crimes to justice and accountability.

84. I am encouraged by the efforts made by national authorities towards assuming more responsibility for the protection and security of the civilian population. This requires continued strong leadership, including stopping the manipulation of political actors and armed groups to stoke tensions for their own political or resource gains to the detriment of the civilian population, or to divide international or regional partners. The Central African people can no longer be the eternal victims of selfish or narrow agendas.

85. The recurring demands of Central Africans for justice and accountability need to be fulfilled. However, judicial processes alone are not enough to ensure redress for victims, accountability and support reconciliation. I strongly urge the Government to work closely with MINUSCA to advance the design and implementation of a comprehensive, gender-sensitive and victim-centred transitional justice strategy, and to ensure that it is in full compliance with international human rights norms and standards, and linked to the African Initiative-led peace process. The ongoing work to establish the truth, justice, reparations and reconciliation commission is a welcome step that should be complemented by other mechanisms to ensure a truly comprehensive and integrated process.

86. I welcome the efforts made so far to extend State authority throughout the country, including where the State has been mostly absent, which should lay the ground for progressive decentralization and the strengthening of local democratic governance. However, Central African authorities remain largely unable to protect or provide services to the population, thus greatly affecting its legitimacy and the renewal of the social contract. Its efforts are constrained owing to insecurity but also a lack of means, capacities and logistics, which we must do more to help overcome. As the State continues to extend its presence, it is imperative that the sensitivity and perception of the population be taken into account when deploying State representatives, particularly national security forces. I therefore strongly encourage the Government to pursue its policy of fair participation and representation in the management of public service, including by promoting competent, professional and impartial civil servants, including the participation of diverse ethnic groups. Such measures would help to nurture national unity and build the legitimacy and acceptance of the State.

87. To that end, I welcome the deployment in several areas of the country of armed forces trained by the European Union Training Mission with the operational support of MINUSCA. This is essential to reinforce national ownership and the forces' responsibility for the security of their own country and people, and to pave the way for the eventual exit of the Mission. The deployment of the forces and the broader security sector reform require sustainable financial and logistical support to transform the situation on the ground. It will require enhanced efforts to develop the defence and security forces into professional, representative and geographically balanced forces that are accepted by the local population throughout the country. I would therefore recall the recommendations I made in my abovementioned letter dated 15 May addressed to the Security Council (see para. 66). I also encourage that equal attention be paid to the national police and the gendarmerie, as the main tools to ensure law and order. In that regard, I warmly welcome the expansion of the mandate of the European Union Training Mission to advise the Ministry of the Interior and the gendarmerie on civilian-military cooperation, complementing the role of MINUSCA.

88. I remain alarmed by the continued precarious humanitarian situation, which in recent months has caused internal displacement to reach levels exceeding those at the

height of the crisis in 2014. I am equally concerned by a protracted refugee situation, with the large numbers of Central African refugees in neighbouring countries. I call upon the Government to accelerate measures to support the safe and dignified repatriation of refugees, particularly in the west, where security conditions are in place. That will require support for local community dialogue to ensure acceptance and re-affirmation of the property rights for returnees, as well as assistance from humanitarian agencies.

89. Humanitarian partners continue to provide the bulk of basic services outside Bangui in an increasingly dangerous and costly operating environment, while their operations remain chronically underfunded. It is unacceptable that humanitarian actors are attacked, resulting in loss of lives, and the looting of their supplies. Such actions lead to the suspension of humanitarian operations, which not only deprives communities of much-needed assistance but also prevents development from taking hold. Those attacks must stop. Armed groups must commit to enabling the delivery of humanitarian and development assistance. I also urge donors to help meet the funding requirements, which are vital to providing assistance as half the population struggles to meet daily food needs and nearly one third of the population is acutely food insecure.

90. Serious investments are needed in infrastructure to benefit the population and development efforts, but also to strengthen the Mission's mobility. I strongly urge the Government and all partners to support such investments and to start development and recovery opportunities promptly in order to complement and progressively replace humanitarian assistance. I welcome the greater engagement by the European Union and the World Bank, including through their commitment to enhancing development investment as a means to create a conducive economic environment and opportunities for job creation. That also requires closer alignment of the political and security strategies, which take into account humanitarian and development needs.

91. Despite the serious concerns I have outlined in the present report, I am still optimistic and see many opportunities. To realize them for the benefit of the Central African people, we need to have a shared vision and stronger commitment to ensure meaningful and effective collaboration and sustained partnerships, including through the revitalized International Support Group. My Action for Peacekeeping initiative also provides a basis for attaining such unified support and close cooperation. I stand by the commitments laid out in the Declaration of Shared Commitments on United Nations Peacekeeping Operations with respect to MINUSCA, and call on all stakeholders to do the same, with appreciation for the vast majority of countries, including the Central African Republic, that have signed it.

92. Based on the findings outlined in the present report, I recommend that the Security Council extend the mandate of MINUSCA for a period of one year, until 15 November 2019, with an authorized troop ceiling of 11,650 military personnel, including 480 military observers and staff officers; an authorized police strength of 2,080 police personnel, including 400 individual police officers and 1,680 formed police unit personnel; and 108 corrections officers.

93. The priority mandated tasks of MINUSCA under Security Council resolution 2387 (2017) — to support the political process, protect civilians and facilitate the creation of a secure environment for the delivery of humanitarian assistance — should be maintained, while strengthening its mandate related to its political support to the peace process and security strategy, as recommended in paragraphs 55–60 and 68–70 above. This will require adjustments to the structure and capacities of MINUSCA, particularly with respect to political capacities, and the capabilities of its force. I also recommend that the Security Council include two new tasks in the Mission's mandate, to support the electoral process and to provide limited logistical support to the

national armed and internal security forces, as described in paragraphs 63 and 67. I also recommend that the role of MINUSCA be adjusted with respect to natural resources, relying on the comparative advantages of partners, as referenced in paragraph 72.

94. I am grateful to my Special Representative, Parfait Onanga-Anyanga, for his unwavering dedication and leadership. I am immensely grateful to the resolute commitment of the personnel of MINUSCA, the United Nations country team and the troop- and police-contributing countries, often in extreme conditions. I am also grateful to my Special Representative for Central Africa and Head of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa, François Louncény Fall, for his role in the subregion in support of the Central African Republic. I thank the African Union, the Economic Community of Central African States, the European Union, the World Bank, bilateral and international partners, including through the International Support Group, and non-governmental organizations for their continued efforts to help the Government and all Central Africans to realize a peaceful and stable country. Finally, I warmly thank Mr. Valdés for his contribution to our efforts in the Central African Republic through his leadership of the strategic review.

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Situation in Abyei

Report of the Secretary-General

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to paragraph 32 of Security Council resolution 2416 (2018), in which the Council requested to be informed of progress in implementing the mandate of the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA). It covers the period since the issuance of my previous report (S/2018/293), from 30 March to 7 October 2018, and should be read in conjunction with my letter to the Council dated 20 August (S/2018/778), in which I provided detailed reconfiguration recommendations, and the briefing of my Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations of 20 September,[1] in which he updated the Council on the efforts that the Governments of the Sudan and South Sudan had made towards implementing the steps outlined in Council resolution 2412 (2018).

II. Abyei

A. Security situation

2. During the reporting period, insecurity in the Abyei Area related mainly to intercommunal clashes linked to the migration of the Misseriya through the Area and to the Amiet common market and weak rule of law. During the annual migration in 2018, an estimated 37,000 Misseriya pastoralists arrived in the Abyei Area then returned northwards between May and June, following the onset of the rainy season. Some pastoralists continued to remain in northern Abyei Area, because of the stable security situation, opportunities afforded by the Amiet common market and the increased access to water through quick-impact and humanitarian projects. Intercommunal relations improved through the proactive engagement of UNISFA with the communities and its robust military posture, particularly along flashpoints. Consequently, the communities have stayed within the agreed areas to avoid conflict, no longer necessitating the disengagement line first instituted by UNISFA three years ago to prevent large-scale intercommunal violence during the migration season.

3. Notwithstanding those improvements, intercommunal tension and violence around the Amiet common market persisted owing to the population influx to the Abyei Area and the presence of different communities trading at the market, including

[1] See www.un.org/press/en/2018/sc13513.doc.htm.

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Darfuris, Nuer and nationals of neighbouring countries. On 27 June, two Ngok Dinka were shot dead by unidentified gunmen, believed to be Misseriya, at Wut Amath, Sector Centre. In what seemed to be a retaliatory act, on 11 July, nine armed men attacked a group of Misseriya returning from the market along the Todach-Goli road, Sector North. One Misseriya was killed and three were injured. On 15 July, one Ngok Dinka was shot dead at Dungop, Sector South, by armed men, allegedly Misseriya.

4. Tensions between the Misseriya and Nuer entering into the Abyei Area from Unity State, South Sudan, were largely centred around the south-east of the Area. On 17 April, three Misseriya and one Nuer were killed at Dem Dem, on the Mayom-Marial Achak road, Sector South. A vehicle belonging to a Nuer was also burned during the incident. On 11 May, armed men suspected to be Nuer attacked Misseriya herdsmen at Myordol, near Marial Achak, Sector South, resulting in three fatalities. The reason for the attack was not established. The period also witnessed clashes between Ngok Dinka and Nuer when, on 27 April, a Nuer was prevented by a Ngok Dinka from driving through the Amiet common market. Shortly thereafter, Nuer men mobilized and attacked Ngok Dinka, resulting in minor injuries to three persons.

5. Some intracommunal clashes also occurred during the reporting period, owing to weak rule of law and ineffective criminal and justice systems. On 5 April, within the Misseriya Awlad Kamil community at Dawas, Sector North, two persons were reported killed. There followed another clash on 6 April within the Misseriya Awlad Kamil community at Um Khaer market, Sector North, in which one person was stabbed and six others were beaten. On 20 April, armed men attacked a vehicle belonging to an international non-governmental organization (NGO) polio vaccination team at Tajelei, Sector South. In the attack, the driver was killed and three people were wounded. On 18 May, a national staff driver for the International Organization for Migration (IOM) was arrested and detained at a community protection committee security check point at the Amiet common market over a misunderstanding with the Dinka staff at the check post. A UNISFA armed escort intervened and the driver was released. On 4 September, Ngok Dinka subtribal groups clashed with each other at the market, resulting in injuries to two persons.

6. Several security incidents related to cattle rustling. On 8 April, Misseriya men rustled 51 goats from the Ngok Dinka in Mabok, Sector South. Of those, 34 were retrieved and returned to their owner. On 15 April, unidentified armed men rustled 200 Misseriya cattle at Atay-2, near Marial Achak, Sector South. Of those, 160 were recovered. On 1 May, eight unidentified men rustled 70 goats at gunpoint at Wunrouk, Sector South. The goats were later located at Makuac Alrbek, Sector South, and returned to their owner. On 16 August, a group of armed men believed to be Misseriya from the Awlad Kamil tribe rustled 31 cattle from Ngok Dinka herdsmen at Mirok, Sector Center. The cattle were recovered at Sink and El Shamam, Sector North, after the rustlers abandoned them to avoid being apprehended by UNISFA troops.

7. While the current military threat to the Abyei Area remains limited, the presence of armed groups has the potential to inflame tensions between the communities. There were nine sightings by the local population of armed men around Noong and Mulmul in Sector Centre and in Sector South, at Abyen Theny, Bokchop, Wunduop, Bachuol Malual and Abathok. Most sightings were between the Amiet common market and Abyei town and along the rivers, in Nymora and Kiir/Bahr-al-Arab. In two instances, UNISFA apprehended individuals suspected of belonging to the Sudan People's Liberation Army and other armed groups within the Abyei Area. On 30 March, a suspected Sudan People's Liberation Army soldier was arrested by UNISFA at the market. The suspect claimed he had been an officer of the Army but was currently a trader. The next morning, the suspect escaped from the Amiet common market detention centre. On 5 June, six persons suspected of being members of an armed group were arrested and detained at Goli, Sector North. On 15 June, following an

investigation, the suspects were escorted to Farouk, Sector North, where they boarded a vehicle to El Muglad, Western Kordofan, the Sudan. In September, two reports were received of armed men from Twic State, South Sudan, entering into southern Abyei Area on 16 September and 27 September. The reports could not be verified as the roads were inaccessible because of rain. The occasional presence of South Sudanese armed men in the Abyei Area and the continued presence of Sudanese police at the Diffra oil complex in Sector North remained in direct violation of the Agreement between the Government of the Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement on temporary arrangements for the administration and security of the Abyei Area (the Agreement of 20 June 2011).

8. In order to maintain relative calm in the Abyei Area, the UNISFA military component continued to maintain a robust deterrent posture, with day and night patrols. UNISFA also ensured security through the implementation of its conflict prevention and mitigation strategy; an enhanced presence in vulnerable areas, including flashpoints, such as water sites, villages adjoining rivers and the Amiet common market; the deployment of static patrols at the market and observation posts at the four watch towers; and the confiscation of weapons. More than a dozen joint security committee meetings were held each week throughout the area to provide an early warning capability and a quick response to the presence of armed groups. Furthermore, an early warning system was instituted involving the local authorities and village heads to improve the collection of information and provide a quick response by a dedicated quick-reaction force/team designated in all Sectors.

9. During the reporting period, UNISFA conducted 19,022 day and night patrols and 6,284 escort patrols. Given that the Abyei Police Service had not been established, the UNISFA police component continued its efforts to support the maintenance of law and order, with 12 or 13 joint military and police observation patrols per day throughout the Abyei Area, including interaction with community protection committees, traditional authorities and local community members. With the prevailing rainy season, special aerial patrols were conducted in addition to the regular weekly aerial patrols to monitor inaccessible waterlogged areas. From August, the national monitors of South Sudan and the Sudan have also accompanied the aerial patrols.

10. UNISFA continued its efforts to keep the Abyei Area weapons-free. On 26 June, a UNISFA patrol confiscated an assault rifle, four magazines and 20 rounds of ammunition from a Misseriya man near Marial Achak, Sector South. On 3 July, United Nations police handed him to the Government of the Sudan through the Sudanese national monitors, as witnessed by Misseriya traditional leaders. Furthermore, on 15 August, the Diffra oil police handed over three rocket-propelled grenades and one fragmentation grenade to the UNISFA Sector North battalion at Diffra, that it alleged had been fired at an oil installation. The grenades were then disposed of by the United Nations Mine Action Service.

11. During the period, the United Nations Mine Action Service continued to enable UNISFA operations in the Abyei Area through the removal of explosive remnants of war and by delivering risk education. It assessed 17,116 m^2 as safe from explosive hazards and collected and destroyed 47 explosive remnants of war and 171 rounds of ammunition. It maintained the mission's storage facility for the weapons and ammunition confiscated by UNISFA troops in line with its standard operating procedures. It continued to deliver mine risk education to the Abyei population, not only in central and southern Abyei, but also for the first time in northern Abyei, the latter through a partnership with a local Sudanese NGO. In total during the reporting period, 39,087 people (14,866 boys, 12,546 girls, 6,328 men and 5,347 women) were given mine risk education in 1,081 sessions. Teams from the Mine Action Service

also distributed 18,044 school bags equipped with school accessories and mine risk education materials to schools throughout northern, central and southern Abyei.

B. Rule of law issues

12. The Amiet common market continued to grow as the economic hub of the Abyei Area, attracting foreign nationals and traders from Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia and Uganda, as well as traders from Khartoum and Juba. It also provided opportunities for dialogue between the Ngok Dinka and the Misseriya on continuing their mutual trading and coexistence. However, criminals also took advantage of the booming business and the increase in population at the market. During the reporting period, a total of 586 crimes were committed at the market, ranging from theft to incidents of shooting, robbery, cattle rustling and public disorder. The sporadic public disorder incidents and increase in criminal activities at the common market were addressed by the joint peace committee, which is advised and mentored by the traditional justice expert with the UNISFA community liaison section and the United Nations police. The joint peace committee, along with the joint traditional court, the market committee and the community protection committee, including members from both sides, is responsible for maintaining law and order at the market.

13. The joint traditional court at the Amiet common market, along with the community protection committee, continued to play a pivotal role in the dispensation of justice. They received guidance from the mission's traditional justice expert on basic legal principles, such as the right to a fair hearing, the rights of anyone accused of a crime and the need for judicial independence. UNISFA, along with other United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, supported a request by the community protection committee to improve living conditions at the Amiet common market detention centre, based on a human rights due diligence policy.

14. The proliferation of makeshift residential huts in the vicinity of the market also posed a great threat to peace and stability in the market. In that regard, other markets emerged in Aniet, Agok, Sector South, and in Abyei's Mul-Mul market, creating a need for a greater United Nations police presence to maintain law and order amid an expanding population and increased number of returnees and internally displaced persons from South Sudan conflicts.

15. In that respect, in June, UNISFA issued notes verbales to South Sudan and the Sudan in which it encouraged them, in compliance with paragraph 7 of Security Council resolution 2416 (2018), to appoint the relevant officials to join UNISFA in a joint integrated planning exercise and in developing a road map towards the establishment of an Abyei police service. UNISFA followed up with two reminders but has yet to receive a response.

16. In the absence of an Abyei police service, the United Nations police continued to advise and mentor the community protection committees on maintaining law and order. More specifically, United Nations police conducted 1,830 interactive community patrols to mobilize members of the public to participate actively in peacebuilding initiatives; trained some 105 community protection committee members (90 men and 15 women) in basic policing principles and compliance with human rights standards; conducted 16 crime prevention and reduction awareness campaigns; and conducted seven road safety campaigns targeting drivers, pedestrians and schoolchildren. The United Nations police mentored members of the community protection committees at detention centres on international standards when handling accused and detained persons. Despite those efforts, overcrowding, the prolonged pretrial detention of accused persons, poor hygiene and sanitation, food shortages and the detention of juveniles persisted at the detention centres.

17. With regard to sexual and gender-based violence, on 10 April, UNISFA interviewed two women who had allegedly been raped at gunpoint by Misseriya at Wankir, Sector Centre, on 8 March as they gathered grass in the bush. The perpetrators had not been apprehended. Victims of sexual and gender-based violence often found it difficult to report such incidents for fear of being stigmatized. They also lacked access to health care and psychological or social support. UNISFA conducted seven awareness campaigns on sexual and gender-based violence in an effort to minimize the abuse of women's and children's rights.

C. Local-level peace process

18. UNISFA continued to facilitate community-level peace processes during the reporting period, particularly through regular joint meetings of the joint peace committees. The meetings were instrumental in addressing grievances, including those related to cattle rustling and other forms of crime, and in promoting dialogue and reconciliation between the Ngok Dinka and the Misseriya, and, more recently, in addressing tension between the Misseriya and members of the South Sudanese Nuer community. UNISFA facilitated and observed 18 such meetings during the reporting period.

19. The issue of payment of "blood money" continued to be divisive during joint peace committee meetings, with aggrieved families of victims holding joint peace committee members accountable over delays. The Misseriya accused Ngok Dinka counterparts of a lack of commitment to the agreement on the payment of blood money. The Ngok Dinka community leaders clarified that they found it increasingly difficult to raise funds owing to lack of cooperation from the community. The joint peace committee therefore proposed in August that a joint conference be organized early in the coming dry season for traditional leaders of the two communities to deliberate on a number of outstanding issues, including the payment of blood money, ahead of the migration.

20. UNISFA, in collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and IOM, facilitated a post-migration conference on 25 June at Todach, Sector North, which brought together 20 participants each from the Ngok Dinka and Misseriya communities. At that conference, the communities discussed the lessons they had learned from the previous migration season and reached an agreement on various issues ranging from sharing water resources amicably and equitably to preserving the environment.

21. While most intercommunal tensions involved the Ngok Dinka and the Misseriya, within the past year, friction between the Misseriya and the Nuer in the neighbouring Unity State in South Sudan has also spilled over into the Abyei Area. On 4 April, a joint peace committee meeting was held to deliberate on the rustling by the Nuer from South Sudan of 250 cattle belonging to the Misseriya at Mabok, Sector South, in the eastern migration corridor. The Misseriya held their Ngok Dinka counterparts responsible for aiding the Nuer rustlers. The stolen cattle, allegedly taken through Rumamier, Sector South, to Unity State were never recovered. Furthermore, an incident on 11 May at Marial Achak, Sector South, in which three Misseriya were killed by the Nuer prompted the joint peace committee on 17 May to invite representatives of the Nuer at the Amiet common market to their meetings. Tensions between the Ngok and Twic Dinka over alleged land encroachments by Twic Dinka in southern Abyei also persisted but have been comparatively low-key.

22. UNISFA also facilitated a number of other workshops and events affecting the local-level peace process. To shape their understanding of the roles of traditional justice practitioners in peacebuilding, human rights and promoting communal

harmony, a workshop on customary law, international human rights standards and peacebuilding was held on 8 and 9 May at Diffra, attended by Misseriya representatives, including customary court judges and community leaders. Two workshops on women's and gender issues were organized for the Ngok Dinka community from 17 to 19 April in Abyei, with a total of 300 participants, on the theme: "Together for a community of equality, peace and prosperity". For the Misseriya community, a workshop was organized at Diffra on 20 June involving 56 participants to raise awareness about gender equality and the importance of education. That followed two consultative meetings that had been held with Misseriya women by the UNISFA gender unit. From 25 April to 5 May, UNISFA facilitated a two-week youth sports tournament in Abyei, Todach and Amiet, with participants from both communities at the latter two locations, on the theme: "Abyei Youth Promoting Peace through Sports".

23. In order to better facilitate monitoring and reporting and mission interventions on the protection of women and children, as the Council requested in paragraph 28 of its resolution 2416 (2018), the mission has recruited a staff member whose visa request was submitted to the Government of the Sudan on 2 September.

D. Political process

24. While UNISFA operations continued to enhance peace and stability within the Abyei Area through a robust military presence and by supporting local-level dialogue, the parties to the Agreement of 20 June 2011 made little progress on the implementation of the commitments therein. No meetings of the Abyei Joint Oversight Committee were held during the reporting period, the most recent meeting having been in November 2017.

25. To encourage both parties to meet their commitments and promote the resumption of regular meetings of the Abyei Joint Oversight Committee, UNISFA held separate meetings with Committee co-chairs, on 14 May in Khartoum and on 6 June in Juba. It also met with relevant government interlocutors, including representatives of the ministries of foreign affairs and defence of both parties.

26. UNISFA continued to interact with other stakeholders, including the African Union High-level Implementation Panel and regional organizations based in Addis Ababa to further efforts to advance the political dialogue. It also met with my Special Envoy for the Sudan and South Sudan on 28 May in Addis Ababa, and with the leadership of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan on 5 June in Juba.

27. The African Union High-level Implementation Panel had intended for there to be a ministerial meeting following the Joint Political and Security Mechanism meeting, to discuss Abyei, and specifically the final status and the establishment of the interim institutions envisaged in the June 2011 Agreement. However, as the Mechanism met on 24 September, both foreign ministers were already committed to official duties at the General Assembly in New York. The Abyei issue was therefore deferred.

E. Humanitarian and recovery situation

28. Humanitarian and recovery needs remained significant in the Abyei Area. The dire economic situation in South Sudan and the Sudan has further affected the services and livelihoods of the communities throughout the Abyei Area. In addition, in 2018 the Abyei Area has faced new small-scale emergencies, including spikes in

malnutrition and flooding that have resulted in new displacements. Currently, some 2,000 people have been affected by floods, mainly in Athony, Sector South.

29. The United Nations and partners continued to assist some 182,000 vulnerable people across the Abyei Area, including: 87,000 people from the Ngok Dinka communities, including returnees; 15,000 Ngok Dinka displaced within the Abyei Area; 9,000 people displaced from neighbouring states in South Sudan; 34,000 people from the Misseriya communities; and 37,000 seasonal Misseriya migrants who had entered the area in October 2017 and migrated back in June and July.

30. To protect the most vulnerable people and support the rule of law, the aid community rehabilitated the existing detention facility in Abyei town and provided non-food items to the local communities as well as conflict-affected displaced people from South Sudan who transited through the Abyei Area. However, the absence of formal authorities in Abyei continued to pose challenges in carrying out and coordinating humanitarian and recovery interventions. While the aid community working in the area has limited capacity, community expectations are high.

31. The absence of development projects and the inability to deliver basic social services continued to have an adverse effect on people in the Abyei Area and their perception of UNISFA. With a view to enhancing community engagement and building local support, UNISFA facilitated the delivery of humanitarian assistance by providing logistical support, especially during the rainy season. From August, among other measures, special flights were arranged for humanitarian partners and force protection was provided in order to conduct humanitarian assessments and to address the mounting number of malaria cases. For example, a visit was made on 5 September to Athony, where 600–700 flood-affected people were located.

F. Administrative aspects and mission support

32. As at 3 October, the UNISFA military component stood at 4,531 personnel (4,289 troops, 130 military observers and 112 staff officers), against an authorized ceiling of 4,500. The mission has already identified 34 troops to be repatriated in order for the mission to conform to its authorized strength. The United Nations police strength stood at 36 officers — 25 male and 11 female — against an authorized total of 50. The number of civilian staff stood at 142 international staff, 33 United Nations Volunteers and 76 national staff, against an authorized total of 161 international staff, 33 United Nations Volunteers and 86 national staff. The Government of the Sudan issued 138 visas for UNISFA personnel during the reporting period, while 48 visas remained pending, for 3 international staff members, 10 military personnel, 11 United Nations police personnel, 1 United Nations Mine Action Service staff member, 9 official visitors and 14 contractors. A note verbale requesting visas for an additional 11 officers was sent to the Government of the Sudan on 10 September to ensure that police personnel reached the authorized ceiling of 50 officers, as the Council requested in paragraph 4 of its resolution 2416 (2018).

33. With the onset of rains late in May, the temporary operating bases of Um Khariat, Alal, Agony Tok and Dungoup were withdrawn. However, company operating bases remained deployed in the three sectors at Farouk, Diffra, Goli and Todach in Sector North; Dokura/Rumajak, Noong and Abyei in Sector Centre; and Marial Achak, Athony, Banton, Tejalei and Agok in Sector South.

34. Infrastructure and environmental installations are being upgraded at all camps. A new mission headquarters is being substantially completed. New accommodation facilities for military staff officers and observers and United Nations police within the Abyei camp are at an advanced stage of completion. Drainage in the Abyei camp has been improved, but partial flooding in July and August owing to severe rainy

spells indicates that drainage work needs to be expanded. Other infrastructure work to improve conditions in the Abyei camp has been suspended owing to a shortage of marram and fuel from the Sudan. During the rainy season, some company operating bases were cut off owing to bad road conditions, which made it challenging to perform maintenance tasks at those locations.

35. Of the 33 wastewater treatment plants planned for all UNISFA bases, 18 have been installed and the remaining 15 will be installed during the upcoming dry season. It is anticipated that all will be installed by 30 December. There was a delay from the Government of the Sudan in giving clearance to the contractor for the installation of the pending plants. Relying on local, individual contractors for the operation and maintenance of wastewater treatment plants exposes the mission to risk, owing to the lack of adequate skills or an accountability framework. To address that risk, a camp services contractor will be deployed to start work in the dry season.

36. During the reporting period, UNISFA operated three fixed-wing aircraft and four helicopters, of which two were under a letter-of-assist from the Government of Ethiopia. The mission undertook a total of 39 aerial patrols for the Abyei Area. The mission completed the rotation of two infantry battalions and one utility helicopter unit, for a total of 3,982 troops (1,993 inbound and 1,989 outbound), and the transportation of 330 tons of inbound and outbound troops' luggage through Kadugli airport. All of the luggage was transported by road between Kadugli and Abyei, as the Government of the Sudan continued to withhold permission to use the airstrip at Athony, Sector South, which is 90 per cent completed. Since June, owing to the poor road conditions, the mission started airlifting rations to troops at five company operating bases within the Abyei Area and to one team site of the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism. Such activities continue to put a strain on the mission's limited air assets. The mission continued to receive ground-handling support from the contracted service providers of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in Entebbe, Uganda, and the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur in Khartoum. In May, UNISFA aircraft supported a United Nations-African Union hybrid operation in Darfur for 22 delegates travelling from Khartoum to Addis Ababa.

37. Notwithstanding damage caused by a lightning strike on 11 September, the extent of which is currently being verified, UNISFA improved and expanded its information and communication technology infrastructure and the wireless coverage of its sectors and team sites. The aim is also to address welfare concerns, notably the sense of isolation of troops and staff members stemming from the remoteness of the deployment areas. Challenges in providing effective medical services include the lack of night flying capability for emergency casualty evacuation and medical evacuation and vulnerability to malaria.

III. Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism

A. Operations

38. During the reporting period, the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism planned 54 aerial monitoring missions, of which 43 were undertaken. All missions received clearances, but 11 patrols were cancelled, four of which owing to adverse weather conditions, five to non-availability of aircraft because of technical issues and two as a result of holidays. Aerial patrols continued to be a critical aspect of all operations under the Mechanism, particularly during the rainy season, when ground mobility is limited. On 3 October, an aerial patrol observed a suspected military camp near As Sumayah/Wierayan.

39. Ground operations from the sector headquarters in Gok Machar, South Sudan, remained hampered, with local communities preventing the movement of UNISFA personnel and demanding that land occupied by UNISFA and the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism be paid for or vacated. In particular, the Mission has been unable to conduct ground patrols and establish team sites within the 14 Mile Area. Even as the inaugural meeting of the ad hoc committee of the 14 Mile Area was under way in Abyei on 21 May, local people in Gok Machar staged a demonstration in front of the sector headquarters, blocking its access and demanding the removal of the sector commander. Despite efforts by the South Sudanese delegation to the ad hoc committee of 14 Mile Area, the community is opposed to any operations by the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism, for fear that their land will be appropriated by the Sudan. On 31 May, traditional chiefs reiterated their objections to the planned deployment of team sites within the 14 Mile Area. At the second meeting of the ad hoc committee in Gok Machar, on 26 August, the South Sudanese delegation recommended that the matter be referred to the Joint Political and Security Mechanism. At the extraordinary meeting of that Mechanism, held under the auspices of the African Union High-level Implementation Panel in Addis Ababa on 24 September, South Sudan agreed to establish by 1 October a high-level team, which would work in collaboration with the ad hoc committee of the 14 Mile Area, to sensitize the communities, with the aim of allaying their concerns that the operations of the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism would prejudice the current or future legal status of the border, and to allow free movement for the operations of that Mechanism by 10 October.

40. The Tishwin/Panakuac team site remained in the same location since its establishment on 26 January and continued to report on security forces' deployment within the Safe Demilitarized Border Zone. The Sudan maintained a well-armed military camp that included tanks and artillery pieces in location, as well as a police camp, while South Sudan had two police camps along the Heglig-Bentiu axis. All 53 ground patrols from the Tishwin/Panakuac team site were given clearances and 44 were undertaken, while 9 were cancelled owing to impassable roads caused by heavy rains.

41. Following on from the 24 September meeting of the Joint Political and Security Mechanism, South Sudan has not formed a high-level team to move forward sensitization efforts. Preliminary reconnaissance ground patrols prior to the arrival of the South Sudanese high-level sensitization team were to take place at Safaha/Kiir Adem and As Sumayah/Wierayan on 29 September and 1 October, respectively, but both had to be cancelled because the traditional chiefs did not give their permission to gain access to the 14 Mile Area.

42. Also at the 24 September meeting of the Mechanism, the parties requested UNISFA to deploy to Abu Qussa/Wunkur in Southern Kordofan, the Sudan, by 10 October, in order to establish a team site. On 3 October, a joint team comprising UNISFA personnel as well as Sudanese and South Sudanese national monitors proceeded to Alerie, 38 kilometres north of Abu Qussa/Wunkur, to ascertain whether the security conditions there would make it possible to establish a team site. At Alerie, the team met with Sudanese armed forces, who reported that the presence of rebel groups made it impossible for them to guarantee the security of the team site if it were deployed at Abu Qussa/Wunkur.

43. Regarding the phase I border crossing corridors, at the 24 September meeting of the Mechanism, the parties confirmed that all 10 crossings were open and requested UNISFA to verify free movement along the corridors. The above-mentioned high-level sensitization team has also been requested to undertake sensitization efforts in the Kosti-Renk corridor, to finalize its opening. For the Timsaha-Buram border crossing corridor, the parties requested the Mission's assistance in opening the

corridor. In that regard, the Mission awaits the plan of the African Union Border Programme technical team and the Joint Technical Border Corridor Committee to help assist with the marking.

44. At the 24 September meeting of the Mechanism, the parties also identified two additional corridors along the River Nile at Kosti-Renk and Talodi-Tonga. The parties agreed to present a plan for the remaining border crossing corridors at their next meeting, scheduled to be held in Juba on 12 October.

B. United Nations Mine Action Service operations

45. The United Nations Mine Action Service continued to support the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism with mine-protected vehicles, the provision of explosive ordnance disposal, demining capacity and medical and mechanical support. Teams from the Mine Action Service were currently deployed to the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism headquarters in Kadugli and Gok Machar, and to the Tishwin/Panakuac team site. On 6 July, following the request by the Sudanese senior national monitor that approximately seven kilometres of road to the Toma South oil field be cleared of mines within the Safe Demilitarized Border Zone, the Mine Action Service undertook limited demining operations until the request for termination was received from the Sudan on 31 July. No landmines or explosive remnants of war were encountered. The demining request had come in follow-up to the two sides jointly opening up the Toma South oil field in early July.

IV. Financial aspects

46. The General Assembly, by its resolution 72/289, appropriated the amount of $263.9 million for the maintenance of the Force for the period from 1 July 2018 to 30 June 2019. As at 3 October 2018, unpaid assessed contributions to the Special Account for UNISFA amounted to $78.5 million. Total outstanding assessed contributions for all peacekeeping operations at that date amounted to $2,475.9 million. Troop costs have been reimbursed for the period up to 30 June 2018, while the costs of contingent-owned equipment have been reimbursed for the period up to 31 March 2018, in accordance with the quarterly payment schedule.

V. Observations and recommendations

47. UNISFA fulfilled its core mandate by stabilizing the Abyei Area, in anticipation of a negotiated settlement of the Area and the border areas between South Sudan and the Sudan. However, neither party has taken advantage of that relative calm, and implementation of the agreements remains limited. As a result, while envisaged as an interim security force, UNISFA remains in place seven years after its establishment, with little progress having been made in the political process.

48. However, I would like to commend the commitment of the two communities in the Abyei Area, the Ngok Dinka and Misseriya, to the local-level peace process. Undeterred by the lack of progress made by the two national Governments regarding the resolution of the final status, they have achieved a degree of peaceful coexistence.

49. The presence of UNISFA in the Abyei Area and within the border monitoring mechanism remains crucial to sustaining the stability achieved thus far. However, the mission must adapt to the situation on the ground and work proactively to create the space needed for a viable political process. Essentially, UNISFA must continue to

support the two Governments and the African Union to work towards achieving a political resolution to the conflict.

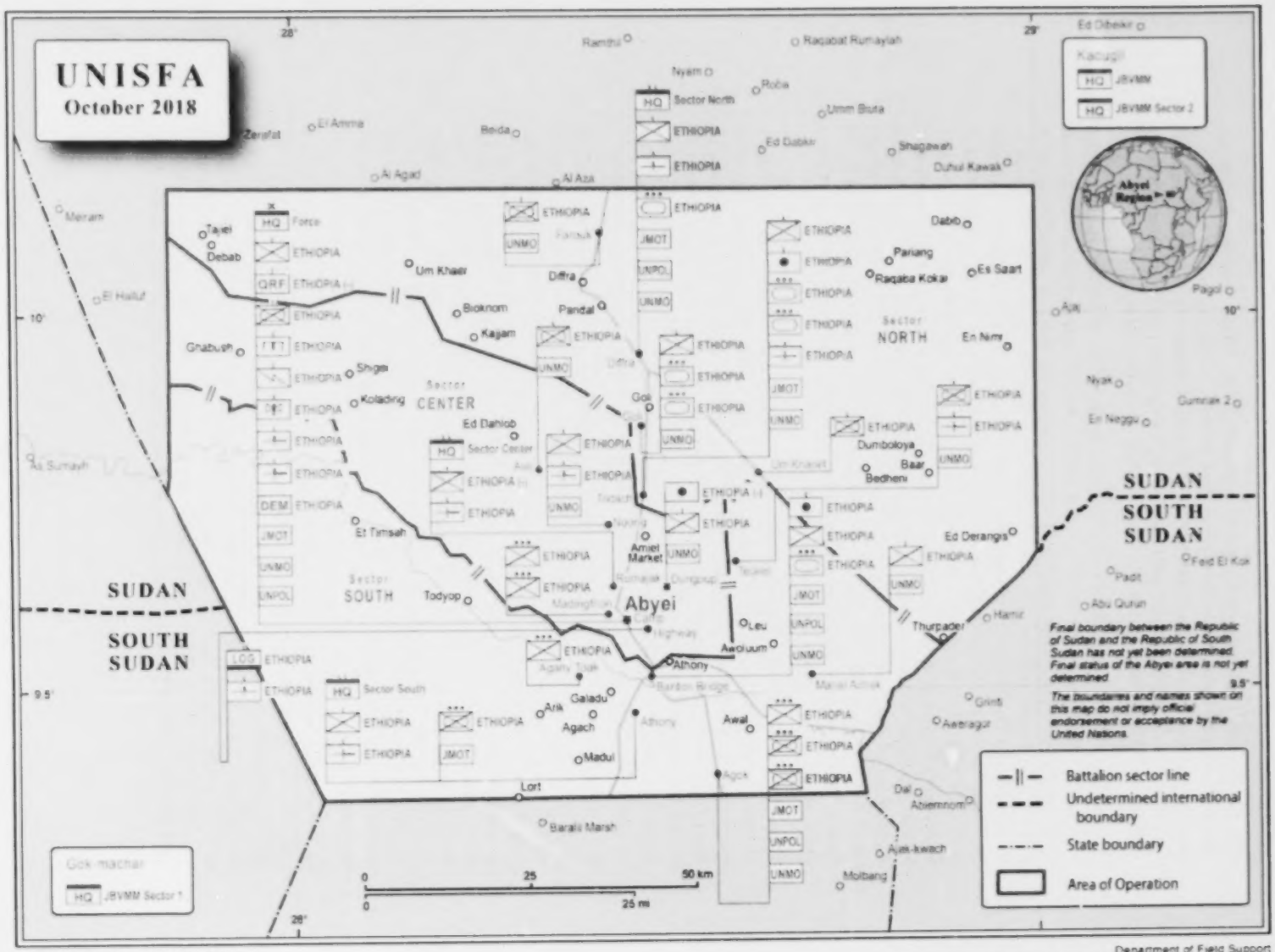
50. In the past year, the relationship between South Sudan and the Sudan has improved, in particular in the most recent few months, given the role of the Sudan in facilitating talks between the South Sudanese parties in Khartoum. I urge the Security Council to build upon that momentum by supporting both parties in their efforts to implement their agreements, and to work towards a political resolution.

51. In that regard, I urge the Council to view the progress described in the present report as only part of what could be achieved if UNISFA were enhanced to provide further support to the parties and the African Union. In the light of Council resolution 2378 (2017) on the reform of United Nations peacekeeping operations, by which in its paragraph 1 the Council stressed that the primacy of politics should be the hallmark of the approach of the United Nations to the resolution of conflict, I submitted in August a reconfiguration proposal to adapt UNISFA to realities on the ground. A reconfigured mission would benefit from the ongoing reconciliation process between South Sudanese opposition and government forces that resulted in the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan, signed in Addis Ababa on 12 September. In the event that this initiative leads to a return to stability in South Sudan, the two sides would be better positioned to discuss the outstanding issues from the Comprehensive Peace Agreement of 2005.

52. The efforts of South Sudan and Sudan remain central to progress, and the failure of the Abyei Joint Oversight Committee and the Joint Political and Security Mechanism to hold regular meetings threatens the consolidation of the gains made so far. I urge both Governments to undertake discussions at the ministerial level to review the implementation of their agreements, and I pledge the support of the United Nations to such a focused endeavour. I believe that the two sides have the ability, political will and capital to resolve their outstanding disputes in a finite timeframe.

53. Building on the positive momentum in the region, I urge the Council to consider positively my reconfiguration proposal of August 2018 and the extension, with modifications, of support to the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism, whose invaluable work I would like to acknowledge. In the main, my proposal aims to enhance the capacity of UNISFA to support the political process with respect to the Abyei and border issues and the efforts of the African Union Commission and the African Union High-level Implementation Panel in that regard. I therefore recommend that the mandate of UNISFA be extended for one year based on the reconfiguration recommendations provided earlier, to assist the Governments and the communities to make additional progress towards achieving the goals they have set for themselves.

54. Finally, I would like to thank the new acting Head of Mission and Force Commander, Major General Gebre Adhana Woldezgu, who has led UNISFA in fulfilling its current mandate. I acknowledge with thanks the outstanding work of my Special Envoy for the Sudan and South Sudan, Nicholas Haysom, who moves to an equally challenging assignment as Head of Mission of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia. I also wish to extend my gratitude to the African Union High-level Implementation Panel and the African Union Commission for their stewardship of the peace process.


UNISFA
October 2018
SUDAN
SOUTH SUDAN
Abyei
Sector NORTH
Sector CENTER
Sector SOUTH
Sector South
Sector North
Sector Center
Final boundary between the Republic of Sudan and the Republic of South Sudan has not yet been determined. Final status of the Abyei area is not yet determined.
The boundaries and names shown on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.
Battalion sector line
Undetermined international boundary
State boundary
Area of Operation
0 25 50 km
0 25 mi
Map No. 4467 Rev. 40 UNITED NATIONS
October 2018 (Colour)
Department of Field Support
Geospatial Information Section (formerly Cartographic Section)

United Nations S/2018/924

Security Council

Distr.: General
15 October 2018

Original: English

Credentials of the alternate representative of China on the Security Council

Report of the Secretary-General

Pursuant to rule 15 of the provisional rules of procedure of the Security Council, the Secretary-General wishes to report that he has received a letter dated 15 October 2018 from the Permanent Representative of China to the United Nations stating that Mr. Guo Jiakun has been appointed alternate representative of China on the Security Council.

In the opinion of the Secretary-General, that letter constitutes adequate provisional credentials.

18-17304 (E) 191018

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17 October 2018

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General Assembly
Seventy-third session
Agenda item 34
Prevention of armed conflict

Security Council
Seventy-third year

Letter dated 15 October 2018 from the Permanent Representative of Armenia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Upon the instructions of my Government, I am transmitting herewith the record of the ceasefire violations by the Azerbaijani armed forces along the State border of the Republic of Armenia during the month of September 2018 (see annex I).*

I am also transmitting herewith the record of ceasefire violations registered by the Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh Republic) during the month of September 2018 (see annex II).*

I kindly request that the present letter and its annexes be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 34, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Mher **Margaryan**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

* The annexes are being circulated in the language of submission only.

18-17317 (E) 221018

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Annex 1 to the letter dated 15 October 2018 from the Permanent Representative of Armenia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Violations of the ceasefire by the armed forces of the Republic of Azerbaijan along the State border with the Republic of Armenia, 1–30 September 2018

Date	*Direction*	*Incidents*	*Type of weapons/shots*
1 September	**Tavush, Vayots Dzor and Ararat regions**	**11**	Small arms and light weapons: 358
	Aygedzor	2	Small-calibre sniper weapons: 24
	Baghanis	2	Large-calibre sniper weapons: 20 (Areni)
	Barekamavan	1	Large-calibre machine guns: 25
	Areni	1	
	Chiva	3	
	Zangakatun	2	
2 September	**Tavush, Vayots Dzor and Ararat regions**	**6**	Small arms and light weapons: 44
	Chinari	1	Small-calibre sniper weapons: 16
	Aygedzor	1	Large-calibre sniper weapons: 53 (Areni: 50; Paruyr Sevak: 3)
	Khndzorut	1	Large-calibre machine guns: 50
	Areni	1	
	Paruyr Sevak	1	
	Zangakatun	1	
3 September	**Tavush, Vayots Dzor and Syunik regions**	**12**	Small arms and light weapons: 93
	Chinari	1	Large-calibre machine guns: 63
	Aygedzor	1	
	Voskevan	3	
	Baghanis	3	
	Koti	2	
	Khndzorut	1	
	Agarak	1	
4 September	**Tavush, Vayots Dzor and Ararat regions**	**11**	Small arms and light weapons: 243
	Aygedzor	5	Small-calibre sniper weapons: 16
	Paravakar	1	
	Baghanis	1	
	Yelpin	1	
	Zangakatun	2	
	Yeraskh	1	
5 September	**Tavush, Gegharkunik, Vayots Dzor and Ararat regions**	**9**	Small arms and light weapons: 49
			Small-calibre sniper weapons: 10
	Aygedzor	1	Large-calibre sniper weapons: 4 (Areni)
	Koti	1	Large-calibre machine guns: 10
	Jil	1	
	Areni	2	
	Yelpin	1	

Date	*Direction*	*Incidents*	*Type of weapons/shots*
	Chiva	2	
	Zangakatun	1	
6 September	**Tavush, Gegharkunik, Vayots Dzor and Ararat regions**	**11**	Small arms and light weapons: 146 Large-calibre sniper weapons: 50 (Areni)
	Aygedzor	1	Large-calibre machine guns: 53
	Kayan	1	
	Voskevan	1	
	Koti	2	
	Kakhakn	1	
	Tsapatagh	1	
	Areni	2	
	Chiva	1	
	Zangakatun	1	
7 September	**Tavush, Gegharkunik, Vayots Dzor and Syunik regions**	**28**	Small arms and light weapons: 950 Small-calibre sniper weapons: 16
	Aygedzor	3	Large-calibre sniper weapons: 40 (Areni)
	Chinari	12	Large-calibre machine guns: 193
	Vazashen	3	
	Aygehovit	1	
	Koti	1	
	Vahan	2	
	Chambarak	1	
	Areni	2	
	Yelpin	1	
	Arevis	2	
8 September	**Tavush, Gegharkunik, Vayots Dzor and Syunik regions**	**17**	Small arms and light weapons: 207 Small-calibre sniper weapons: 86
	Aygedzor	1	Large-calibre sniper weapons: 49 (Areni: 33; Yelpin: 16)
	Chinari	1	Large-calibre machine guns: 130
	Paravakar	2	
	Berdavan	2	
	Vazashen	1	
	Areguni	1	
	Chambarak	1	
	Areni	4	
	Yelpin	3	
	Bardzravan	1	
9 September	**Tavush and Vayots Dzor regions**	**11**	Small arms and light weapons: 109
	Chinari	4	Small-calibre sniper weapons: 190 (Areni: 120; Yelpin: 70)
	Sevkar	1	Large-calibre machine guns: 75
	Voskevan	2	
	Areni	2	
	Yelpin	2	

Date	*Direction*	*Incidents*	*Type of weapons/shots*
10 September	**Tavush, Vayots Dzor and Ararat regions**	**10**	Small arms and light weapons: 83
	Chinari	2	Large-calibre sniper weapons: 16 (Areni: 40; Zangakatun: 16)
	Vazashen	1	Large-calibre machine guns: 31
	Baghanis	2	
	Areni	1	
	Chiva	3	
	Zangakatun	1	
11 September	**Tavush, Vayots Dzor and Ararat regions**	**5**	Small arms and light weapons: 3
	Chinari	1	Small-calibre sniper weapons: 1
	Chiva	1	Large-calibre sniper weapons: 165 (Chiva: 70; Areni: 70; Zangakatun: 25)
	Areni	1	
	Paruyr Sevak	1	
	Zangakatun	1	
12 September	**Tavush, Vayots Dzor and Ararat regions**	**9**	Small arms and light weapons: 69
	Chinari	3	Small-calibre sniper weapons: 11
	Vazashen	1	Large-calibre sniper weapons: 10 (Areni)
	Baghanis	1	Large-calibre machine guns: 45
	Voskevan	1	
	Areni	1	
	Zangakatun	1	
	Paruyr Sevak	1	
13 September	**Tavush and Ararat regions**	**9**	Small arms and light weapons: 66
	Chinari	2	Large-calibre sniper weapons: 4 (Paruyr Sevak)
	Aygepar	1	Large-calibre machine guns: 40
	Kayan	1	
	Baghanis	1	
	Voskevan	1	
	Paruyr Sevak	2	
	Zangakatun	1	
14 September	**Tavush, Gegharkunik and Vayots Dzor regions**	**34**	Small arms and light weapons: 975
			Small-calibre sniper weapons: 122
	Chinari	10	Large-calibre sniper weapons: 40 (Areni)
	Aygedzor	2	Large-calibre machine guns: 297
	Paravakar	5	
	Vazashen	4	
	Kayan	5	
	Sevkar	2	
	Voskepar	1	
	Koti	1	
	Jivanavan	1	
	Geghamasar	1	
	Avazan	1	
	Areni	1	

Date	*Direction*	*Incidents*	*Type of weapons shots*
15 September	**Tavush, Gegharkunik, Vayots Dzor and Ararat regions**	**40**	Small arms and light weapons: 639 Small-calibre sniper weapons: 3
	Chinari	13	Large-calibre sniper weapons: 106 (Jil: 8; Geghamasar: 3; Chinari: 5; Kolagir: 4; Movses: 4; Areni: 50; Zangakatun: 22; Chapni: 10)
	Kolagir	4	
	Movses	4	
	Baghanis	1	Large-calibre machine guns: 583
	Barekamavan	1	Grenade launchers: 7
	Jil	8	
	Geghamasar	4	
	Tsapatagh	1	
	Kakhakn	1	
	Vahan	1	
	Areni	1	
	Zangakatun	1	
16 September	**Tavush and Vayots Dzor regions**	**16**	Small arms and light weapons: 239
	Chinari	3	Small-calibre sniper weapons: 5
	Aygedzor	1	Large-calibre sniper weapons: 6 (Areni)
	Movses	1	Large-calibre machine guns: 20
	Kayan	1	
	Kirants	1	
	Berkaber	2	
	Berdavan	1	
	Koti	3	
	Baghanis	1	
	Voskepar	1	
	Areni	1	
17 September	**Tavush, Gegharkunik and Ararat regions**	**22**	Small arms and light weapons: 365
	Chinari	2	Small-calibre sniper weapons: 5
	Movses	3	Large-calibre sniper weapons: 21 (Tigranashen: 1; Lichk: 20)
	Berkaber	1	Large-calibre machine guns: 225
	Vazashen	1	
	Barekamavan	7	
	Berdavan	1	
	Koti	2	
	Baghanis	2	
	Geghamasar	1	
	Lichk	1	
	Tigranashen	1	
18 September	**Tavush, Gegharkunik, Vayots Dzor and Syunik regions**	**11**	Small arms and light weapons: 77 Small-calibre sniper weapons: 26
	Chinari	1	Large-calibre machine guns: 12
	Berkaber	2	
	Barekamavan	2	
	Baghanis	1	

Date	*Direction*	*Incidents*	*Type of weapons shots*
	Geghamasar	2	
	Areni	1	
	Agarak	2	
19 September	**Tavush and Vayots Dzor regions**	**8**	Small arms and light weapons: 61
	Chinari	2	Small-calibre sniper weapons: 6
	Berdavan	1	Large-calibre sniper weapons: 50 (Areni)
	Voskevan	3	
	Chiva	1	
	Areni	1	
20 September	**Tavush, Vayots Dzor, Ararat and Syunik regions**	**8**	Small arms and light weapons: 720 Small-calibre sniper weapons: 90
	Chinari	3	Large-calibre sniper weapons: 43
	Kolagir	1	(Paruyr Sevak: 6; Areni: 30; Lichk: 7)
	Areni	1	Large-calibre machine guns: 185
	Paruyr Sevak	2	
	Lichk	1	
21 September	**Tavush, Gegharkunik and Ararat regions**	**8**	Small arms and light weapons: 169
	Movses	1	Small-calibre sniper weapons: 20
	Koti	2	Large-calibre sniper weapons: 3 (Vahan)
	Vahan	1	Large-calibre machine guns: 110
	Areni	3	
	Yeraskh	1	
22 September	**Tavush, Gegharkunik and Ararat regions**	**15**	Small arms and light weapons: 307
	Aygedzor	3	Small-calibre sniper weapons: 20
	Chinari	1	Large-calibre sniper weapons: 112
	Movses	1	(Kolagir: 50; Aygedzor: 2; Paruyr Sevak: 5; Areni: 55)
	Kolagir	2	Artillery: 35 (Kolagir)
	Vahan	2	
	Areni	4	
	Paruyr Sevak	2	
23 September	**Tavush, Gegharkunik, Vayots Dzor and Ararat regions**	**21**	Small arms and light weapons: 124 Small-calibre sniper weapons: 17
	Aygedzor	2	Large-calibre sniper weapons: 29
	Chinari	1	(Vahan: 15; Aygedzor: 10; Paruyr Sevak: 4)
	Kolagir	2	Large-calibre machine guns: 40
	Movses	5	Grenade launchers: 1
	Kayan	1	
	Baghanis	1	
	Voskevan	1	
	Geghamasar	2	
	Jil	1	
	Vahan	1	
	Chiva	1	

Date	*Direction*	*Incidents*	*Type of weapons shots*
	Yeraskh	1	
	Paruyr Sevak	2	
24 September	**Tavush, Vayots Dzor and Syunik regions**	**11**	Small arms and light weapons: 84 Small-calibre sniper weapons: 11 Large-calibre machine guns: 50 Grenade launchers: 1
	Chinari	1	
	Aygedzor	3	
	Kolagir	1	
	Koti	1	
	Movses	1	
	Baghanis	1	
	Chambarak	2	
	Yelpin	1	
25 September	**Tavush, Gegharkunik, Vayots Dzor and Ararat regions**	7	Small arms and light weapons: 119 Small-calibre sniper weapons: 31 Large-calibre sniper weapons: 30 (Zangakatun: 15; Areni: 15) Large-calibre machine guns: 90 Grenade launchers: 1
	Aygedzor	1	
	Geghamasar	1	
	Vahan	1	
	Areni	1	
	Yelpin	1	
	Yeraskh	1	
	Zangakatun	1	
26 September	**Vayots Dzor and Syunik regions**	**4**	Small arms and light weapons: 170 Small-calibre sniper weapons: 15 Large-calibre sniper weapons: 15 (Lichk)
	Yelpin	2	
	Chiva	1	
	Lichk	1	
27 September	**Tavush, Gegharkunik and Vayots Dzor regions**	9	Small arms and light weapons: 103 Small-calibre sniper weapons: 20 Large-calibre sniper weapons: 79 (Geghamasar: 4; Areni: 75) Large-calibre machine guns: 364
	N. Karmiraghbyur	1	
	Geghamasar	1	
	Yelpin	2	
	Areni	2	
	Chiva	2	
	Khachik	1	
28 September	**Tavush, Gegharkunik, Vayots Dzor and Ararat regions**	27	Small arms and light weapons: 943 Small-calibre sniper weapons: 104 Large-calibre sniper weapons: 343 (Aygedzor: 5; Yelpin: 227; Areni: 45; Chiva: 20; Zangakatun: 50) Large-calibre machine guns: 105
	Aygedzor	9	
	Chinari	2	
	Aygepar	3	
	N. Karmiraghbyur	1	
	Koti	1	
	Yelpin	4	
	Chiva	3	
	Areni	3	
	Zangakatun	1	

Date	*Direction*	*Incidents*	*Type of weapons/shots*
29 September	**Tavush, Vayots Dzor and Ararat regions**	**13**	Small arms and light weapons: 218
	Aygedzor	2	Small-calibre sniper weapons: 60
	Chinari	2	Large-calibre sniper weapons: 4 (Yelpin)
	Kolagir	1	
	Barekamavan	1	
	Yelpin	3	
	Areni	3	
	Yeraskh	1	
30 September	**Tavush, Vayots Dzor and Ararat regions**	**17**	Small arms and light weapons: 628
	Aygedzor	4	Small-calibre sniper weapons: 87
	Chinari	1	Large-calibre sniper weapons: 5 (Areni 5)
	Koti	4	Large-calibre machine guns: 35
	Barekamavan	1	
	Yelpin	1	
	Areni	5	
	Zangakatun	1	

During the reporting period, one soldier of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Armenia was killed by fire from the Azerbaijani side.

Annex II to the letter dated 15 October 2018 from the Permanent Representative of Armenia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Violations of the ceasefire by the armed forces of the Republic of Azerbaijan on the line of contact with the Republic of Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh Republic), 1–30 September 2018

Date	*Direction*	*Incidents*	*Type of weapons shots*
1 September	On the line of contact between the armed forces of Artsakh and Azerbaijan	22	Small arms and light weapons: 432 Small-calibre sniper weapons: 6
2 September	On the line of contact between the armed forces of Artsakh and Azerbaijan	20	Small arms and light weapons: 865 Small-calibre sniper weapons: 2 Large-calibre sniper weapons: 1 (Jraberd)
3 September	On the line of contact between the armed forces of Artsakh and Azerbaijan	19	Small arms and light weapons: 196 Small-calibre sniper weapons: 7
4 September	On the line of contact between the armed forces of Artsakh and Azerbaijan	33	Small arms and light weapons: 299 Small-calibre sniper weapons: 10 Large-calibre machine guns: 20
5 September	On the line of contact between the armed forces of Artsakh and Azerbaijan	27	Small arms and light weapons: 320 Small-calibre sniper weapons: 3 Large-calibre sniper weapons: 1 (Levonarkh) Large-calibre machine guns: 50
6 September	On the line of contact between the armed forces of Artsakh and Azerbaijan	27	Small arms and light weapons: 212 Large-calibre sniper weapons: 9
7 September	On the line of contact between the armed forces of Artsakh and Azerbaijan	20	Small arms and light weapons: 263 Small-calibre sniper weapons: 2 (Kurapatkino) Large-calibre sniper weapons: 6 Large-calibre machine guns: 30
8 September	On the line of contact between the armed forces of Artsakh and Azerbaijan	20	Small arms and light weapons: 253 Small-calibre sniper weapons: 10
9 September	On the line of contact between the armed forces of Artsakh and Azerbaijan	28	Small arms and light weapons: 456 Small-calibre sniper weapons: 16
10 September	On the line of contact between the armed forces of Artsakh and Azerbaijan	30	Small arms and light weapons: 273 Small-calibre sniper weapons: 13 Large-calibre sniper weapons: 14 (Kurapatkino: 2, Gjulistan: 12)
11 September	On the line of contact between the armed forces of Artsakh and Azerbaijan	14	Small arms and light weapons: 127 Small-calibre sniper weapons: 8 Large-calibre sniper weapons: 4 (Ashaghi Veysali)
12 September	On the line of contact between the armed forces of Artsakh and Azerbaijan	21	Small arms and light weapons: 224 Small-calibre sniper weapons: 2
13 September	On the line of contact between the armed forces of Artsakh and Azerbaijan	25	Small arms and light weapons: 307 Small-calibre sniper weapons: 51 Large-calibre sniper weapons: 10 (Gjulistan)

Date	*Direction*	*Incidents*	*Type of weapons shots*
14 September	On the line of contact between the armed forces of Artsakh and Azerbaijan	26	Small arms and light weapons: 530
			Small-calibre sniper weapons: 6
15 September	On the line of contact between the armed forces of Artsakh and Azerbaijan	25	Small arms and light weapons: 300
			Small-calibre sniper weapons: 45
			Large-calibre snuiper weapons: 34 (Haterk: 3; Choporlu: 31)
			Grenade launchers: 10
16 September	On the line of contact between the armed forces of Artsakh and Azerbaijan	27	Small arms and light weapons: 599
			Small-calibre sniper weapons: 19
17 September	On the line of contact between the armed forces of Artsakh and Azerbaijan	22	Small arms and light weapons: 302
			Small-calibre sniper weapons: 7
			Large-calibre machine guns: 30
18 September	On the line of contact between the armed forces of Artsakh and Azerbaijan	27	Small arms and light weapons: 148
			Small-calibre sniper weapons: 14
			Large-calibre machine guns: 2
19 September	On the line of contact between the armed forces of Artsakh and Azerbaijan	32	Small arms and light weapons: 232
			Small-calibre sniper weapons: 23
			Large-calibre machine guns: 14
20 September	On the line of contact between the armed forces of Artsakh and Azerbaijan	27	Small arms and light weapons: 238
			Small-calibre sniper weapons: 5
			Large-calibre sniper weapons: 1 (Horadiz)
21 September	On the line of contact between the armed forces of Artsakh and Azerbaijan	29	Small arms and light weapons: 235
			Small-calibre sniper weapons: 6
			Large-calibre sniper weapons: 35 (Choporlu)
			Large-calibre machine guns: 3
22 September	On the line of contact between the armed forces of Artsakh and Azerbaijan	34	Small arms and light weapons: 579
			Small-calibre sniper weapons: 13
			Large-calibre sniper weapons: 5 (Karvend)
23 September	On the line of contact between the armed forces of Artsakh and Azerbaijan	21	Small arms and light weapons: 57
			Small-calibre sniper weapons: 9
24 September	On the line of contact between the armed forces of Artsakh and Azerbaijan	22	Small arms and light weapons: 766
			Small-calibre sniper weapons: 32
			Large-calibre machine guns: 30
25 September	On the line of contact between the armed forces of Artsakh and Azerbaijan	29	Small arms and light weapons: 284
			Small-calibre sniper weapons: 36
			Large-calibre machine guns: 11
26 September	On the line of contact between the armed forces of Artsakh and Azerbaijan	19	Small arms and light weapons: 192
			Small-calibre sniper weapons: 4
			Large-calibre sniper weapons: 9 (Korgan)
27 September	On the line of contact between the armed forces of Artsakh and Azerbaijan	37	Small arms and light weapons: 235
			Small-calibre sniper weapons: 11
			Large-calibre sniper weapons: 1 (Seysulan)

Date	*Direction*	*Incidents*	*Type of weapons shots*
28 September	On the line of contact between the armed forces of Artsakh and Azerbaijan	40	Small arms and light weapons: 571 Small-calibre sniper weapons: 21 Large-calibre sniper weapons: 13 (Kurapatkino: 6; Gjulistan: 7)
29 September	On the line of contact between the armed forces of Artsakh and Azerbaijan	29	Small arms and light weapons: 341 Small-calibre sniper weapons: 21
30 September	On the line of contact between the armed forces of Artsakh and Azerbaijan	39	Small arms and light weapons: 306 Small-calibre sniper weapons 13 Large-calibre machine guns: 60

During the reporting period, one soldier of the Defence Army of Artsakh was killed and one soldier was wounded by gunfire from the Azerbaijani side.

United Nations S/2018/926*

Security Council

Distr.: General
17 October 2018

Original: English

Letter dated 16 October 2018 from the representatives of Côte d'Ivoire, France, Kuwait, the Netherlands, Peru, Poland, Sweden, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

We, the undersigned members of the Security Council, request a meeting of the Council on the situation in Myanmar, pursuant to rule 2 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

We request that the Chair of the fact-finding mission on Myanmar formally brief a meeting of the Security Council under that item, which will enable Council members to receive further information on the situation and its implications for international peace and security.

We would be grateful if the present letter could be circulated as a document of the Security Council, with a view to consideration of the item in the month of October.

(*Signed*) Gbolié Désiré Wulfran **Ipo**
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

for
Kacou Léon **Adom**
Permanent Representative
Côte d'Ivoire

(*Signed*) François **Delattre**
Permanent Representative
France

(*Signed*) Mansour Ayyad Sh. A. **Alotaibi**
Permanent Representative
Kuwait

(*Signed*) Karel **van Oosterom**
Permanent Representative
Netherlands

(*Signed*) Gustavo **Meza-Cuadra**
Permanent Representative
Peru

* Reissued for technical reasons on 24 October 2018.

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(*Signed*) Joanna **Wronecka**
Permanent Representative
Poland

(*Signed*) Olof **Skoog**
Permanent Representative
Sweden

(*Signed*) Karen **Pierce**
Permanent Representative
United Kingdom

(*Signed*) Nikki **Haley**
Permanent Representative
United States

United Nations S/2018/927

Security Council

Distr.: General
23 October 2018
English
Original: Arabic

Identical letters dated 16 October 2018 from the Permanent Representative of Iraq to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

On instructions from my Government, I should like to draw your attention to the numerous violations of Iraqi territory that have been committed by the Turkish Republic. In that connection, I transmit to you herewith a summary of those violations for the period from June 2017 to September 2018 (see annexes). I should also like to draw your attention to the following.

The bombardment of Iraqi territory by the Republic of Turkey and the presence of its military forces in Iraq, under the pretext that Turkey is protecting its internal security, violates the sovereignty Iraq.

Those violations of the sovereignty Iraq are contrary to the principles of good neighbourliness, violate the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and international law, and causes the fragile situation in the region to decline further.

My Government reiterates its willingness to cooperate with all neighbouring countries, with a view to finding common ground and arriving at appropriate solutions that will bring an end to those repeated violations.

I should be grateful if the present letter and its annexes could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Mohammed Hussein Bahr **Aluloom**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annexes to the identical letters dated 16 October 2018 from the Permanent Representative of Iraq to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

Annex I

Information on the presence of Turkish troops in Iraqi territory

Sector controlled by First Brigade of the Border Guard, Dahuk governorate:

Turkish brigades of 300 or more soldiers) and companies of 75 soldiers are present in seven area.

Sector controlled by Second Brigade of the Border Guard, Irbil governorate:

Turkish brigades and companies are present in 12 areas.

Annex II

Turkish violations of Iraqi territory and airspace committed in 2017

Date of violation	*Nature of violation*	*Location*
1–30 November 2016	Artillery barrage	Northern operations sector
20–31 December 2016	Air violation	Northern operations sector
1–30 November 2016	Bombardment of territory and violation of airspace	Northern operations sector
3–14 January 2017	Air violation	Northern operations sector
1–31 December 2016	Bombardment of territory and violation of airspace	Northern operations sector
18–21 November 2016	Violation of Iraqi airspace	Northern operations sector
1–31 December 2016	Violations	Iraq
1–31 January 2017	Aerial violation and bombardment	Northern operations sector
1–31 January 2017	Air violation and artillery bombardment	Northern operations sector
1–31 January 2017	Air violation and artillery bombardment	Northern operations sector
2016	Air violation and artillery bombardment	Northern operations sector
18–19 January 2017	Air violation	Northern operations sector
2–7 February 2017	Air violation	Northern operations sector
17–28 February 2017	Air violation	Northern operations sector
1–10 February 2017	Air violation	Northern operations sector
4–14 April 2017	Air violation	Northern operations sector
1–28 February 2017	Bombardment and air violation	Northern operations sector
21–30 March 2017	Air violation	Northern operations sector
1–31 March 2017	Air violation and bombardment of territory	Northern operations sector
1–28 February 2017	Air violation and bombardment of territory	Northern operations sector
January and February 2017	Air violation and bombardment of territory	Northern operations sector
1–31 March 2017	Air violation and bombardment of territory	Northern operations sector
17–30 April 2017	Air violation and bombardment of territory	Northern operations sector
2–15 May 2017	Air violation and bombardment of territory	Northern operations sector

Date of violation	*Nature of violation*	*Location*
16–31 May 2017	Air violation and bombardment of territory	Northern operations sector
1–30 April 2017	Violations and incursions	Northern operations sector
1–15 May 2017	Violation of Iraqi airspace	Northern operations sector
16–30 June 2017	Violation of Iraqi airspace	Northern operations sector
1–31 May 2017	Violation of airspace and bombardment of Iraqi territory	Northern operations sector
1–15 July 2017	Violation of Iraqi airspace	Northern operations sector
1–30 April 2017	Violation of Iraqi airspace	Northern operations sector
15–31 July 2017	Air violation and artillery bombardment	Northern operations sector
May and June 2017	Air violation and artillery bombardment	Northern operations sector
1–30 June 2017	Air violation and artillery bombardment	Northern operations sector
1–31 May 2017	Air violation and artillery bombardment	Northern operations sector
1–15 August 2017	Violation of Iraqi airspace	Northern operations sector
1–30 June 2017	Air violation and artillery bombardment	Northern operations sector
16–31 August 2017	Violation of airspace and bombardment of Iraqi territory	Northern operations sector
1–31 July 2017	Violation of airspace and bombardment of Iraqi territory	Northern operations sector
1–15 September 2017	Violation of Iraqi airspace	Northern operations sector
July and August 2017	Violation of Iraqi airspace	Northern operations sector
16–30 September 2017	Violation of Iraqi airspace	Northern operations sector
1–31 August 2017	Air and border violations	Northern operations sector
1–15 October 2017	Violation of Iraqi airspace	Northern operations sector
16–27 October 2017	Violation of Iraqi airspace	Northern operations sector
2–15 November 2017	Violation of Iraqi airspace	Northern operations sector
1–31 October 2017	Violation of Iraqi airspace	Northern operations sector
16–30 November 2017	Violation of Iraqi airspace	Northern operations sector
1–31 October 2017	Violation of Iraqi airspace	Northern operations sector
1–31 July 2017	Violation of Iraqi airspace	Northern operations sector
1–30 September 2017	Violation of Iraqi airspace	Northern operations sector
1–30 September 2017	Violation of Iraqi airspace	Northern operations sector
1–15 September 2017	Violation of Iraqi airspace	Northern operations sector

Annex III

Turkish violations of Iraqi territory and airspace committed in 2018

No.	*Date of violation*	*Nature of violation*	*Number of violations*	*Location*
1.	1–31 August 2017	Air violation	21	Northern operations sector
2.	1–30 November 2017	Air violation and artillery bombardment	32	Northern operations sector
3.	1–13 January 2018	Air violation	37	Northern operations sector
4.	1–31 December 2017	Air violation and artillery bombardment	24	Northern operations sector
5.	20–31 January 2018	Air violation and artillery bombardment	20	Northern operations sector
6.	1–31 December 2017	Border violation, gunfire and artillery bombardment	25	Northern operations sector
7.	1–31 January 2018	Violation of airspace and bombardment of territory	11	Various areas, such as the cities of Dahuk and Sulaymaniyah
8.	1–15 February 2018	Air violation	39	Northern operations sector
9.	17–28 February 2018	Air violations	10	Northern operations sector
10.	23 November 2017 to 5 February 2018	Aerial and artillery bombardment and gunfire	24	Areas controlled by the First Brigade of the Border Guard
11.	1 January to 31 December 2018	Air violation and artillery bombardment	11	Northern operations sector
12.	7–15 March 2018	Air violation	34	Northern operations sector
13.	1–28 February 2018	Air violation, border incursion and artillery bombardment	9	Various border areas
14.	1–28 February 2018	Artillery barrage	9	Various border areas
15.	Thursday, 5 April 2018, from 0800 to 0900 hours	Air violation	1	Northern Iraq
16.	5–15 April 2018	Air violation and artillery bombardment	16	Northern operations sector
17.	1–15 April 2018	Air violation	76	Northern operations sector
18.	16–31 December 2017	Air violation	41	Northern operations sector
19.	1–31 March 2018	Bombardment of Iraqi territory	14	Various border areas

No.	Date of violation	Nature of violation	Number of violations	Location
20.	16–29 April 2018	Air violation	63	Northern operations sector
21.	January and February 2018	Violation of Iraqi territory	7	Northern operations sector
22.	14–19 March 2018	Various violations	4	Various areas
23.	1–31 March 2018	Air violation and artillery bombardment	14	Various areas
24.	March 2018	Border violation and incursion	5	Kurdistan region border
25.	3–9 May 2018	Violation of territory	2	Northern operations sector
26.	1–15 May 2018	Air violation	16	Northern operations sector
27.	9–15 May 2018	Violation of territory	3	Northern operations sector
28.	1–31 March 2018	Violation and incursion	7	Northern operations sector
29.	1–30 April 2018	Bombardment of border areas	22	Northern operations sector
30.	1–30 April 2018	Bombardment of border areas	22	Northern operations sector
31.	1–31 March 2018	Border violation and incursion	26	Northern operations sector
32.	8 April 2018	Turkish forces violated borders of Iraq	4	Border areas
33.	23–30 May 2018	Turkish forces violated borders of Iraq	7	Various areas
34.	16–31 May 2018	Violation of Iraqi airspace	87	Northern operations sector
35.	16–22 May 2018	Violations of Iraqi territory	7	Northern operations sector
36.	1–30 April 2018	Violations of Iraqi territory	–	Various
37.	30 May to 6 June 2018	Violations of Iraqi territory	8	Various
38.	Presence of Turkish troops	Presence of Turkish troops	Three tables	Northern Iraq
39.	1–15 June 2018	Violation of Iraqi airspace	148	Northern operations sector
40.	21 June 2018	Violation of and incursion into Iraqi territory	1	Sidakan, Irbil governorate border
41.	31 May to 2 June 2018	Violation of and incursion into Iraqi territory	3	Various areas
42.	16–21 May 2018	Violation of Iraqi territory	7	Various areas

No.	*Date of violation*	*Nature of violation*	*Number of violations*	*Location*
43.	1 March to 31 May 2018	Violation of Iraqi territory	16	Various areas
44.	16–22 June 2018	Violation of Iraqi territory	9	Various areas
45.	1–31 May 2018	Border violation and incursion	3	Various areas
46.	1–31 May 2018	Border violation and incursion	15	Various areas
47.	4 July 2018	Violation of Iraqi territory	13	Various areas
48.	16–30 June 2018	Air violation	163	Northern operations sector
49.	7 July 2018	Violation of Iraqi airspace	2	Northern operations sector
50.	1–30 April 2018	Violation of Iraqi airspace	32	Northern operations sector
51.	1–31 May 2018	Air violation and border incursion	19	Northern operations sector
52.	14–19 March 2018	Violation and bombardment of territory	4	Northern operations sector
53.	11–21 July 2018	Border violation and incursion	9	Northern operations sector
54.	1–30 June 2016	Border violation and incursion	17	Northern operations sector
55.	4–11 July 2018	Violation of Iraqi territory	13	Northern operations sector
56.	1–15 July 2018	Violation of Iraqi territory	143	Northern operations sector
57.	20–26 July 2018	Border violation and incursion	5	Various areas
58.	1–30 July 2018	Bombardment of territory	17	Various areas

United Nations A/ES-10/798–S/2018/928

General Assembly
Security Council

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General Assembly
Tenth emergency special session
Agenda item 5
Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Security Council
Seventy-third year

Identical letters dated 16 October 2018 from the Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Security Council

I regret to inform that Israel, the occupying Power, has continued its intentional killing and injuring of Palestinian civilians under its military occupation, in utter disregard for basic morality, the rule of law, including humanitarian and human rights law, and United Nations resolutions that have repeatedly demanded an end to such illegal policies and practices.

Since our previous letter, the occupying Power's forces have continued to shoot to kill and shoot to maim Palestinian civilians protesting peacefully against the injustice that their people have been subjected to as a result of decades of colonization, dispossession, apartheid and the structural violence of the occupation. Such systematic targeting of unarmed civilians, including children, is deplorable and illegal, constituting war crimes and crimes against humanity, and must be countered by the international community in both word and deed.

On 2 October 2018, an Israeli sniper shot and killed an elderly Palestinian man, Ibrahim Ahmad Nassar al-Arouqi, 74 years of age, as he stood in the street near his home in Al-Maghazi refugee camp.

On 3 October, Ahmed Abu Habil, 15 years of age, succumbed to his wounds after an Israeli soldier struck him with a tear gas canister that became lodged in his skull, causing lethal damage.

On 5 October, Faris al-Sirsawi, age 12; Hussein al-Raqab, age 18; and Mahmoud Akram Samaan, age 24, were shot and killed by Israeli occupation forces. On 7 October, another child, still unidentified, was shot and killed.

On 12 October, Israeli forces continued their killing spree, executing seven Palestinians: Ahmed Abdallah Abu Naeem, age 17; Afifi, age 18; Mohammad Issam Abbas, age 21; Ahmed Ibrahim al-Taweel, age 22; Tamer Iyad Abu Armana, age 22; Abdallah Barham al-Daghma, age 25; and Mohammed Abdulhafid Ismail, age 29.

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Such a barbaric display of violence, such a record of tragedies, is horrific and sickening and cannot be justified, explained or condoned by anyone with a basic sense of morality, legality or justice. The vicious imprisonment and savagery by the occupying Power against the Palestinian civilian population of Gaza must stop. Like all humans everywhere, the 2 million Palestinians in Gaza must be protected from such terror.

No child should live in an environment where children are subjected to violence, let alone an environment where children are being killed so systematically. "One Palestinian child per week" is the average number of children that Israeli forces or armed settlers have killed this year, according to the international non-governmental organization Defense for Children International. This is reprehensible and morally unacceptable and must be condemned.

Since the protests began, on 30 March 2018, at least 205 Palestinians, including 45 children, have been killed by the occupying forces and more than 20,000 Palestinians have been wounded, including children, women, older persons and at least 120 journalists and 120 paramedics. The majority of the casualties have been in the Gaza Strip and, since 2 October alone, five volunteer paramedics and nine journalists and media workers have been injured.

Simultaneously with such repression and violence against our people, Israel continues its colonial settlement campaign across the West Bank, including, in particular, in and around Occupied East Jerusalem. This illegal campaign is being pursued, enacted and maintained by Israeli officials at all levels of the State, combined with explicit statements by Israeli politicians provocatively calling for annexation of Palestinian land.

Israeli settlers also continue to terrorize Palestinian civilians, causing deaths, injuries and property damage. On 12 October, a mother of eight children, Aisha Mohammed Rabi, age 47, was stoned to death by terrorist settlers. Aisha was driving with her husband and two daughters when settlers threw rocks at her vehicle and hit her in the head, killing her. This took place near illegal checkpoints and occupation bases, with Israeli soldiers standing idly by. This murder has devastated her family and further traumatized the entire community.

Also, on 14 October, an Israeli settler ran over two Palestinian workers with his car near Kafr Laqif village, east of the northern West Bank district of Qalqilyah. The two workers, Oqab Raji Abed al-Hafith and Ameer Hayel Raji, are still recovering from their injuries.

Such violent settlers operate in a culture that has normalized the terrorizing, dehumanizing and killing of Palestinians. They are wilfully fuelled by the impunity accorded to them, by the incitement of Israeli and other politicians and by Israel's increasingly racist legislation. In addition to living illegally on our lands, the settlers also flood our villages with their sewage water, uproot our ancient olive trees, harass and intimidate our children on their way to school and ravage our agricultural lands, out of hatred, out of fanaticism and out of their sense of impunity.

Those who support the settlement project, whether individuals, organizations or businesses, wherever in the world, bear the responsibility to bring an end to these illegal acts and associated crimes. The settlement regime must be dismantled, and accountability for Israeli crimes is imperative if the prospects for peace are ever to be salvaged and if peace is ever to have a chance.

We reiterate our call to the international community, particularly the Security Council, to uphold its responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security and to implement its legal obligation, in accordance with the Charter of the

United Nations and its own resolutions, to ensure respect for international law vis-à-vis an occupying Power deliberately violating peremptory norms of the law.

While the Palestinian people are determined to continue to use non-violence to call for their rights, we urge the international community to encourage them, to show them that their calls are heeded and not to send them the message that non-violence, international law and the international system will not help their quest for freedom, justice and independence.

The present letter is in follow-up to our 648 previous letters regarding the ongoing crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, which constitutes the territory of the State of Palestine. These letters, dated from 29 September 2000 (A/55/432-S/2000/921) to 1 October 2018 (A/ES-10/797-S/2018/883), constitute a basic record of the crimes being committed by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people since September 2000. For all of these war crimes, acts of State terrorism and systematic human rights violations being committed against the Palestinian people, Israel, the occupying Power, must be held accountable and the perpetrators brought to justice.

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the present letter distributed as a document of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 5, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Riyad **Mansour**
Ambassador
Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations

United Nations S/2018/929

Security Council

Distr.: General
17 October 2018

Original: English

Letter dated 16 October 2018 from the Permanent Representative of Myanmar to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I am writing to you about a matter of great concern to Myanmar with regard to the purported attempt by certain members of the Security Council to invite the fact-finding mission on Myanmar of the Human Rights Council to brief the Council on its report during the seventy-third session of the General Assembly.

Myanmar strongly objects to the invitation of the fact-finding mission for the following reasons:

1. The Government of Myanmar has objected to the fact-finding mission because it has serious and genuine concerns about the advisability, composition and mandate of the mission's establishment. We are also concerned that the release of the report based on narratives and not hard evidence will only serve to inflame tensions further and potentially hinder the Government's efforts to create much-needed social cohesion in Rakhine State. The one-sided report of the mission proved our concerns. The report is clearly detrimental to social cohesion in Rakhine State and undermines the Government's relentless efforts to bring peace, national reconciliation and development to the State.

2. We have a reasonable doubt about the sincerity, independence and motive of the mission. On 27 August 2018, just one day before the Security Council public debate on the situation in Myanmar, the mission released its report in haste, well ahead of the scheduled date of 18 September 2018. Why?

3. On procedural grounds, the invitation to the fact-finding mission, mandated by the Human Rights Council, which is a subsidiary body of the General Assembly, to brief the Security Council is out of procedure and beyond the mandate of the Human Rights Council. Such an exercise, if allowed, will set a bad precedent for the Human Rights Council in the future, with serious negative consequences.

On the question of accountability in Rakhine, the Government of Myanmar has established an Independent Commission of Enquiry, led by Ambassador Rosario Manalo of the Philippines, an eminent diplomat with rich experience in the field of human rights. The Commission also includes Ambassador Kenzo Oshima of Japan, another prominent diplomat, and two highly respected members from Myanmar. The Commission will investigate allegations of human rights violations and related issues, following the terrorist attacks on 9 October 2016 and 25 August 2017 by the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA) in Rakhine State, with a view to seeking accountability and reconciliation. The Commission will conduct its mandate according to the principles of independence, impartiality and objectivity and will

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submit its report within a year. We are willing and able to take on the accountability issues for any alleged human rights violation where there is sufficient evidence. We need to give time and space to the Commission.

The Government of Myanmar is now undertaking as a high priority the preparation of necessary conducive conditions for the safe, voluntary and dignified repatriation of the people who had fled to Bangladesh. In accordance with bilateral agreements and arrangements with Bangladesh, Myanmar has been ready to receive the first batch of verified returnees since January 2018. We welcome the recent statement made by Bangladesh Foreign Minister Ali that Bangladesh will soon repatriate the first batch of 6,000 displaced persons.

During the high-level week of the seventy-third session of the General Assembly, an informal meeting was held that included China, Myanmar and Bangladesh. The Secretary-General was invited and was present at the meeting. At the meeting, a three-point consensus on resolving the issue of displaced persons was reached in a friendly and expeditious manner. As a result of the consensus, a third meeting of the joint working group will be held on 29 and 30 October 2018 in Dhaka to work out detailed arrangements for the first repatriation at an early date.

We are also reaching out to our regional partners in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations for their further assistance in relation to Rakhine State. Recently, we extended an invitation to the ASEAN Troika, comprising the Foreign Ministers of Singapore (the current Chair), the Philippines (the past Chair) and Thailand (the incoming Chair), as well as the Secretary-General of the Association, to Myanmar for the first week of November to exchange views on how the Association can assist Myanmar in addressing the complex issues in Rakhine State.

We are also appreciative of the assistance and cooperation rendered by other neighbouring countries, including China, India and Japan, in the resettlement and rehabilitation of the returnees.

At the same time, we have been continuing our close cooperation with the United Nations. We have signed a memorandum of understanding with the United Nations Development Programme and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees on assisting in the speedy and efficient resettlement and rehabilitation of the returnees. A United Nations team has completed the first phase of a field assessment in 23 villages in northern Rakhine. It is now in the second phase of the field assessment in 26 additional villages.

We are also maintaining constructive engagement with the Secretary-General, and with his Special Envoy in particular, who is currently in Myanmar. The Government has already expressed its agreement to the opening of the office of the Special Envoy during her first visit to Nay Pyi Taw.

We would also like to continue the present mutually respectful and constructive engagement with the Security Council to work together to resolve the humanitarian problems and all the complex issues in Rakhine State. Mutual understanding and cooperation are the only viable way in our common desire to find a sustainable solution to the situation in Rakhine.

Putting accountability above all else without regard for other positive developments is a dangerous attempt that will face utter failure. Unilateral coercive measures without regard for the situation in Myanmar, and the imposition of politically motivated external pressure, will be detrimental to the existing goodwill and the cooperation of the Myanmar Government with the international community. The briefing by the fact-finding mission to the Security Council will not contribute to building peace, harmony, national reconciliation and development in Rakhine State. It will only exacerbate mistrust and polarization among different communities

in Rakhine and damage present constructive engagement between the United Nations and Myanmar.

Therefore, Myanmar always hopes that the involvement of the United Nations in such a complex and sensitive issue should be constructive and helpful to the Government's ongoing efforts towards finding a sustainable solution to the issue of Rakhine State.

I should be grateful if you would circulate the present letter as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Hau Do **Suan**
Permanent Representative